a quarterly on Jainology

jain journal



JAIN BHAWAN
CALCUTTA

VOL. XVIII APRIL 1984 NO. 4

Mahavir Jayanti Special Number on Jainism in Bengal

Rupees Five & Paise Fifty

All contributions, which must be type-written, and correspondence regarding contributions and book-reviews should be addressed to the Editor, Jain Journal, P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta-7.

For advertisement and subscription please write to the Secretary, Jain Bhawan, P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta-7. Subscription for one year : Rs. 10.00 : for three years : Rs. 25.00. Foreign : Rs. 30.00 for one year.

Published by Moti Chand Bhura on behalf of Jain Bhawan from P-25 Kalakar Street and printed by him at The Technical & General Press, 17 Crooked Lane, Calcutta-69.

Editor : Ganesh Lalwani

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Plates

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

The following is a statement of ownership and other particulars about *Jain Journal* as required under Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspapers (Central) Rules 1956 :

FORM IV

1. PLACE OF PUBLICATION
Jain Bhawan
P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta 7

2. PERIODICITY OF ITS PUBLICATION
Quarterly

3. PRINTER'S NAME, NATIONALITY AND ADDRESS
Moti Chand Bhura, Indian
P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta 7

4. PUBLISHER'S NAME, NATIONALITY AND ADDRESS
Moti Chand Bhura, Indian
P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta 7

5. EDITOR'S NAME, NATIONALITY AND ADDRESS
Ganesh Lalwani, Indian
P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta 7

6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OWNER
Jain Bhawan
P-25 Kalakar Street, Calcutta 7

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April **15, 1984**

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Ganesh Lalwani Felicitation Celebration : January, 1984



With Sri Indra Dugar, the veteran artist, in the exhibition room of his paintings. Dr. Nemi Chand Jain, Editor, Tirthankara, is infront of him and Sri K. K. Jain, President of the Celebration Committee, just behind



Receiving the Felicitation Address from Sri Raghunandan Modi, the reputed industrialist and ex-Sheriff of Calcutta







1 Sri Lalwani is lighting the lamp of Goddess of Learning

2 Sri Kanhaiyalal Sethia, the reputed Rajasthani poet, putting kumkum tilak on his fore-head

3 The veteran politician and leader Sri Bijoy Singh Nahar honouring him by presenting the shawl

On Jainism in Eastern India

PARESH CHANDRA DASGUPTA

In the perspective of various literary accounts and legends of yore, as it appears, the religion of the Nirgranthas is as old as the human civilization that once dawned in the Indian sub-continent. While Parsvanatha appears to be a historical figure, the age of Neminatha who was a cousin of Krsna and Baladeva should have covered the epoch of the Battle of Kuruksetra. The line of the Tirthankaras inevitably goes towards a distant past if the historicity of individuals can be established beginning with Rsabhanatha whose glory seemingly referred to in the *Rgveda*. In this connection it may be recalled that some scholars have already attempted to identify certain sculptures and figures of the Indus Valley Civilization as those of Tirthankaras. The discovery of a Mauryan torso of a Tirthankara at Lohanipur, Bihar has obviously strengthened the view.

Though Jainism once spread out in various regions of India, the religion once achieved an immense popularity in the East, particularly in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. It may be noticed that these important sects of the Nirgranthas (Jainism), viz., the Tamraliptiya, the Kotivarsiya and the Pundravardhaniya are specially associated with different regions of Bengal. Apart from the importance of Jaina monuments and sculptures in Eastern India the hallowed tradition in respect of the Sammeta Sikhara appears to hold a unique position in the sub-continent. According to tradition most of the Tirthankaras attained their *nirvāṇa* on the crest of this ancient hill.

As it will be observed, the Jaina art had regional developments in India between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. While the art achieved a warmth of grace, detachment and physical beauty in the west, it delineated a mystic glory and a captivating elegance in Bengal. While among the others the Tirthankara Padmaprabha at Pakbirra, district Purulia, conveys the innermost sublimity of soul, the female divinities discovered at various sites in the State are often replete with a divine grace and sensitivity. A kind of originality of form and design is again conveyed by the terraced *stūpa* at Paharpur in Bangladesh which may have imbibed the plan of an earlier Jaina monument, though a Buddhist *stūpa*, the architecture recalls the convention of the *Jaruka* or *Jaluka* mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patanjali. Besides this, the probable influence of Jaina art has also been noticed in the Buddhist art of Pagan in Burma.

Jainism in Ancient Bengal

R. C. MAZUMDAR

The first recorded contact of Bengal with Jainism was marred by incidents which reflect great discredit on her people. We learn from the *Acārāṅga Sūtra* that when Mahavira wandered as a naked mendicant in Ladha (i.e., Radha or western part of undivided Bengal) through its two divisions known as Vajjabhumi and Subbhabhumi, he was attacked by the people who even went to the length of setting dogs upon him.[1] It appears that it was not due to any malice against Mahavira, but the people generally maltreated the ascetics. It was difficult to travel in Ladha which is described as *duccura* or pathless country. It is said that many recluses lived in Vajjabhumi where they were bitten by the dogs and cruelly treated in hundred other ways. Some of the recluses carried bamboo staves in order to keep off the dogs (*laṭṭhim gahāya ṇālāyam*). The Ajivikas habitually went about with a staff in hand, which was a matter of necessity with them.[2]

Of the peregrinations of Mahavira which brought him to Radha along with Gosala also called Makkhali, we get a full account in Jinadasa's *Cūrṇī* to the *Avaśyaka Sūtra*, and the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* describes how these two, the founders, respectively, of the Jaina and Ajivika sects, settled down together before undertaking the annual journeys. As both these points have a great bearing on the history of Jainism in ancient Bengal it is necessary to discuss them critically.

The *Bhagavatī Sūtra*[3] describes in detail[4] how Gosala, after several unsuccessful attempts, was at last accepted as a disciple[5] by Mahavira at a place called Paniyabhumi. The story, put in the mouth of Mahavira, then proceeds : *aham . . . .gosālenam. . . .saddhim paṇiyabhūmīe chavvā-*

[1] *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. 84.
[2] Barua, B.M., *The Ajivikas*, p. 57.
[3] XV, *sutra* 543.
[4] For a summary, cf. A. L. Basham, *The Ajivikas*, pp. 39-41.
[5] Barua (*op. cit.*, pp. 17 ff.) denies that Gosala was ever a disciple of Mahavira and therefore disbelieves the whole account of the *Bhagavati Sutra*.

sāim viharitthā. The normal meaning of the passage is that the two lived together at Paniyabhumi during the next six years. But this is in conflict with the statement in the *Kalpa Sūtra* that Mahavira spent only one rainy season in Paniyabhumi.[6] In order to reconcile this difference it has been suggested that the word *paṇiyabhūmie* should be taken as in the ablative and not in the natural way, as locative. But this is admitted to be an unusual construction. As according to the persistent Jaina tradition Mahavira led a wandering life except during the rainy season, the expression in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* evidently means that Mahavira and Gosala fixed their headquarters at Paniyabhumi, wandering about from place to place during the year, as described in detail, year by year, by Jinadasa.

The question of the location of Paniyabhumi is also beset with difficulties. The *Bhagavatī Sūtra* seems to indicate that it was situated quite close to Nalanda. But this creates a difficulty. The *Kalpa Sūtra* is in full agreement with Jinadasa's list of places where Mahavira spent the rainy seasons, with the single exception of Vajjabhumi in Ladha. The commentator, Vinayavijaya reconciles this discrepancy by stating that Paniyabhumi, where according to the *Kalpa Sūtra*, Mahavira spent one rainy season, is in Vajjabhumi. Curiously enough, A. L. Basham accepts this explanation and comments that 'thus it is evident that Jinadasa did not invent the whole story';[7] yet elsewhere he severely criticised Dr. B. M. Barua for having located Paniyabhumi in Vajrabhumi on the authority of Vinayavijaya's commentary, 'ignoring the clear statement of the *Bhagavatī* that Paniyabhumi was near Kollaga which was a settlement near Nalanda.'[8]

We are thus placed in a dilemma. If we accept, on the authority of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, that Paniyabhumi was near Nalanda and not in Vajjabhumi, i.e., Radha (West Bengal), the omission of this single name alone from the *Kalpa Sūtra* list of places where Mahavira spent the rainy season which otherwise agrees with the list of Jinadasa, naturally creates some doubt about Mahavira's visit to Radha. On the other hand, the visit of Mahavira to Radha is authenticated not only by Jinadasa but also by the canonical text *Acārāṅga Sūtra*, as stated above. We should remember also that the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* merely refers in a casual way to the places where Gosala met Mahavira and it is possible to argue that the vicinity of Paniyabhumi to Kollaga and Nalanda need not be taken

[6] *Sutra* 122 (Jacobi's edition, p. 64).
[7] Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

as a definite conclusion. Dr. Barua was evidently of this view[9] when he stated, on the authority of Vinayavijaya, that Paniyabhumi was in Vajrabhumi, and held that probably it was river port in West Bengal.[10]

It would be evident from the above discussion that at the time when the Jaina canonical texts were finally drafted there was no clear tradition about the wanderings of Mahavira. Even his visit to Radha or West Bengal is not altogether free from doubt, though it rests upon the testimony of the *Acārāṅga Sūtra* and Jinadasa's *Cūrṇī*, composed probably not earlier than the 7th century A.D. But these testimonies cannot be altogether ignored and we may accept as a provisional hypothesis that according to one line of Jaina tradition Mahavira not only visited Radha but fixed his headquarters for six or more years within its boundary.

It may be argued against this last point that if Mahavira and Gosala settled down in Radha, Jinadasa's reference to their visit to Radha in the 5th and again in the 9th year of Mahavira's asceticism would be somewhat incongruous. But the same objection would remain if we accept the location of Paniyabhumi near Nalanda, as Jinadasa refers their visit to Magadha which includes that locality. Of course, this might be regarded as an argument against the view that they had any fixed headquarters at all, though this would be a very reasonable deduction from the statement in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, as interpreted above.

According to Jinadasa's detailed itinerary, Mahavira, along with Gosala, visited Radha twice, as stated above. On the first occasion they were attacked by two robbers in a village called Punnakalasa. On the second occasion they spent the rainy season at Vajjabhumi, though they were put to great trouble and ignominy by the uncouth people of the locality, as has been described above on the authority of the *Acārāṅga Sūtra*.

Jinadasa refers to Radha as a non-Aryan country, evidently on the basis of an old tradition and with a view to explaining the rudeness of the people. But if we study the itinerary of Gosala and Mahavira as a whole, as described by Jinadasa, we must conclude that respect and reverence to the ascetics was not yet such an established virtue as we are apt to think today. For Jinadasa records numerous instances where Gosala was ill-treated by the local people even in Aryan countries and sometimes

[9] It may also be due to the fact mentioned above, that Barua disbelieves the whole story of the conversion of Gosala by Mahavira (see f.n.5).
[10] Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

Mahavira also shared the sufferings and ignominy with him. Gosala was beaten by villagers on many occasions and also suffered other ignominies at their hands, while he and Mahavira were seized by a village headman and in another place were suspected as spies and thrown into a well.

With this background in view the reception accorded to the ascetics in Radha would perhaps appear less strange, and need not be accounted for simply by the assumption that the people of West Bengal were non-Aryan[11] and therefore of wild character, though that might be partly or even wholly true, for all we know.

At the same time it is only fair to remember that naked ascetics like the Jainas and Ajivikas must have been repulsive to people of good taste and high culture as well as ordinary men not accustomed to such a practice. According to the *Dhammapada Commentary* the Buddhist lady Visakha remarked on seeing an Ajivika, 'Such shameless persons, completely devoid of the sense of decency, cannot be Arihants.'[12] The *Divyāvadāna* records a similar feeling on the part of even a courtesan.[13] Such a feeling must have been more widely spread and far more acute at the time of Mahavira when the people were unaccustomed to such sights of nudity and the women must have been specially shocked at them. How far such a feeling was at work when the people of Radha set dogs upon Mahavira and other naked ascetics, and otherwise ill-treated them, cannot be ascertained, but merely the fact that they were non-Aryan[14] and were therefore necessarily rude and wild, may not be the whole excuse or sufficient expalnation of their conduct. This view gains some strength if it be accepted as a fact, as suggested above, that Gosala and Mahavira chose to live among the people, for such a course implies a gradual change in attitude on the part of the people. No one is likely to fix up his headquarters among a rude and vicious people beyond redemption. Further, as we shall see, the people of this part gradually embraced Jainism and this region became a strong centre of this religion.

[11] But some Jaina texts represent the allied peoples of Anga and Vanga in a good light. Sylvain Levi observes, 'For the Jainas, Anga is almost a holy land. The *Bhagavati* places Anga and Vanga at the head of a list of sixteen peoples, before the Magadha. One of the *Upangas*, the *Prajnapana*, classes Anga and Vanga in the first group of Arya peoples whom it calls the Ksatriya.' The list also includes Tamalitti, i.e. the people of Tamralipta in West Bengal (Radha). P. C. Bagchi, *Pre-Aryan* and *Pre-Dravidian in India* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 73.

[12] *Dhammapada Commentary*, p. 400 ; *evarupa hirottappavirahita* arahanta nama *nahonti*.

[13] *Divyavadana*, ed by Cowell, p. 465.

[14] *Cf.* f.n. 11.

There is an indirect evidence to show that Jainism had established its influence in Bengal in the 4th century B.C. The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela[15] tells us that this king had brought back an image of the Jina of Kalinga which had been taken away by Nanda was evidently a king of the Nanda dynasty who ruled over the Gangaridai or Gandaridai and the Prasioi, mentioned by the Greek writers. Inspite of the loose manner in which these two terms are used by them, it may be reasonably inferred from the statements of the Greek and Latin writers that about the time of Alexander's invasion the Gangaridai were a very powerful nation ruling over the territory about the mouths of the Ganges, and either formed a dual monarchy with the Prasioi or were otherwise closely associated with them on equal terms in a common cause against the foreign invader. The Nanda king who carried the Jaina image from Kalinga may be taken as the ruler of the Gangetic Delta, and the carrying away of the Jaina image to preserve it with care (for it existed unimpaired for 2 or 3 centuries when Kharavela took it back to Kalinga) undoubtedly shows a leaning for Jainism either on the part of the king, or of the people, or, perhaps of both. Kharavela himself was a Jaina, and his own action shows how much the king yearned for the possession of a sacred image of a sect to which he was attached, and it would not be unreasonable to take the same view about the Nanda king. It may, of course, be argued that if the Nanda king in question had a very extensive territory outside Bengal, his own religious feeling might not have reflected that of Bengal. But as the Gangaridai were the people of Bengal, primarily, and Kalinga was adjacent to this region, the view that the carrying away of the Jaina image by the king of Gangaridai indicates the Jaina influence in Bengal has a great degree of probability.

The *Divyāvadāna* records a tradition which shows that the Nirgrantha or Jaina religion was established in Pundra or North Bengal at the time of Asoka. It is said that the lay followers (*upāsaka*) of Jainism in the city of Pundravardhana (North Bengal) had painted a picture representing Buddha falling at the feet of Nirgrantha, and on hearing this Asoka massacred 18000 Ajivikas of Pundravardhana on a single day.[16] It is difficult to put much faith in such a story except as the echo of a tradition that Jainism flourished in Bengal at the time of Asoka in the 3rd century B.C.

This view is strengthened by the statement in the *Kalpa Sūtra* that Godasa, a disciple of Bhadrabahu, founded a school named after him-

[15] Line 12, *Ep. Ind.*, pp. 80, 88.

[16] *Divyavadana*, p. 427. The account mixes up the Nirgranthas and Ajivikas, but the name of the sect is uniformly given as Nirgranthas in the Chinese translation. *Cf.* Przyluski, *La legende de l'Empereur Asoka*, p. 278.

self as Godasa-*gaṇa*. In course of time it had four *śākhās* of which three were known as Tamraliptiya, Kotivarsiya and Pundravardhaniya, named after three very well-known places in ancient Bengal, viz., Tamralipta (Tamluk in Western Bengal or Radha), Kotivarsa and Pundravardhana (both in North Bengal). The nomenclatures leave no doubt about strong Jaina influence in North, West and South Bengal. The *Kalpa Sūtra* is attributed to Bhadrabahu, of the 4th century B.C.,[17] but the present text is not so old, though it contains many old traditions. Inscriptions which may be referred to the end of the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.[18] contain a large number of the names of schools which are mentioned in the *Kalpa Sūtra* and the establishment of the three *śākhās* in Bengal mentioned in the *Kalpa Sūtra* may also be referred to the same period, if not before. We may therefore reasonably assume that by the 1st century A.D. Jainism was firmly established in different parts of Bengal, including Radha whose people had once been so rude to Mahavira. An inscription discovered at Mathura but now in Calcutta Museum, records the errection of a Jaina image in the year 62 at the request of a Jaina monk who was an inhabitant of Rara. Rara is very probably Radha, a well-known variant of Radha (in Bengal) and the date is to be referred to the Kusana era and therefore equivalent to about 150 A.D.[19]

The next definite evidence of Jainism in Bengal is furnished by a copper-plate grant, dated year 159 (of the Gupta era and equivalent to 479 A.D.) found in Paharpur in North Bengal famous for the big Buddhist *stūpa* and monastery of the Pala period. (8th century A.D.) The grant records the endowment, by a Brahmana couple, of lands for the maintenance of worship with sandal, incense, flowers, lamps, etc. of the divine Arhats at the *vihāra* of Vata Gohali which was presided over by the disciples and the disciples of disciples of the Nirgrantha Sramanacarya (Jaina preceptor) Guhanandin, belonging to the Pancastupa section (*nikāya*) of Kasi (Varanasi).[20] This record proves the existence of a Jaina temple with images of the Arhats and a monastery, existing for at least three generations i.e., for nearly a hundred years, or more or since 4th century A.D. at the latest. It also shows that even those who were not professed Jainas, including the Brahmanas had the highest reverence for the Jaina Arhats and regarded it as a pious duty to endow the Jaina temples for defraying the expenses of its daily worship.

[17] According to Jaina tradition he was a contemporary of Candragupta Maurya who ruled from c. 324 to 300 B.C.

[18] Guerinot, *Epigraphie Jaina*, pp. 36 ff. 71 ff.

[19] R. D. Banerji, *Palas of Bengal*, p. 72.

[20] *Ep. Ind.*, XX, pp. 59ff.

Jainism made very good progress in Bengal in the next century. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited this region about 638 A.D. describes Jainism as the dominant religion in two of the most important States, one North and the other in South-eastern Bengal. Referring to Pundravardhana, a big flourishing kingdom in North Bengal the pilgrim says, 'There were 20 Buddhist monasteries .... Deva temples were 100 in number, and the followers of various sects lived pell-mell, the Digambara Nirgranthas being very numerous.'[21] Referring to Samatata or Lower Bengal to the east of the Ganges (more precisely a part of Central Bengal extending upto and including Tipperah District) the pilgrim observes, 'It had more than 30 Buddhist monasteries .... There were 100 Deva temples, the various sects lived pell-mell and the Digambara Nirgranthas were very numerous.'[22] This rendering of Hiuen Tsang's statement in English by T. Watters does not enable us to make a comparative estimate of the importance of Buddhism, Brahmanical religion (Deva temples) and the other sects among which the Jainas predominated. The translation of the same passages by S. Beal is somewhat different and of great significance from this point of view. Thus the first of the two passages is translated as follows, 'There are about twenty *sanghārāmas* .... There are some hundred Deva temples where sectaries of different schools congregate. The naked Nirgranthas are the most numerous.'[23] This would mean that the majority of people who were not Buddhists followed the Jaina religion ; in other words, the Jainas were more numerous even than the followers of Brahmanical religions. But what is probably meant is that among the homeless ascetics, who were not Buddhists, the majority were the followers of Jainism.

Curiously enough, we have no definite information about the position of the Jainas in Bengal after 7th century A.D. Discovery of Jaina images belonging to this period, both in Pundravardhana and Samatata, may be taken to indicate that Jainism still flourished in those regions. But the number of images so far found is very few, and there is no epigraphic record throwing any light on the condition of Jainism after the 7th century A.D. In the *Jaina Inscriptions* (*Jaina Lekha Sangragha*) collected and compiled by Puran Chand Nahar (Calcutta, 1918) there is a short epigraph engraved on the back of an image of Parsvanatha bearing the date 1110 samvat. It adorned a temple at Azimganj in the District of Murshidabad (West Bengal) which was washed away by the

[21] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, II. 184.
[22] *Ibid.*, 187.
[23] Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, II. 195. The same difference occurs in the translation of the other passage also.

Ganges and is now placed in a new temple built in the same locality by the Nahar family. It appears, however, from a footnote that the image was brought from Chitor, evidently by the Nahar family or somebody else in the Muslim or British period.[24] It does not therefore give us any information about the condition of Jainism in Bengal. It is significant however, that no other inscription in Bengal in Nahar collection is older than the 15th century A.D.

We may therefore reasonably conclude that the naked Nirgrantha sect gradually declined in Bengal after the 7th or 8th century A.D. As this coincides with the rise of the Imperial Palas who were Buddhist and ruled over Bengal for nearly four hundred years, from the middle of the 8th to the first part of the 12th century A.D. it is not unreasonable to connect the two events. In other words, one might reasonably suppose that the popularity of Buddhism, due to the patronage of the Pala kings, was the main cause of the decline of Jainism in Bengal. It is not a little strange that not only are the Jaina images of this period exceedingly rare, offering a striking contrast to the numerous images of Buddhist and Brahmanical cults, but the numerous inscriptions in Bengal belonging to this period, and even later, do not contain any reference to Jainism. It has been suggested that the naked Nirgranthas in Bengal were merged in such religious communities as Avadhutas who flourished towards the end of the Pala period. It is interesting to note that a class of the Avadhutas is actually known as Digambaras (naked).

There are many rich and distinguished Jaina families in Bengal today, but they are all descended from the Jainas immigrating from the western parts of India during the Muslim period.

[24] *Jaina Inscriptions*, collected and compiled by Puran Chand Nahar (Calcutta, 1918).

Jaina Art of Bengal

KALYAN KUMAR GANGULI

Of the many diversities that have added strength and vitality to the Indian culture the religion preached by Mahavira has been a significant one. Indians have been able to evolve many attitudes towards life and live their lives in many diverse philosophical ways. These ways have vied with each other in finding out the true essence of purity and Jainism has been one of these ways, making every endeavour to cut clear of all worldly attachments and achieve the end with singleminded devotion. Some five to six hundred years before Christ, India witnessed a large number of persons born in affluence, renouncing all worldly wealth and pleasures in order to find the way of radiance. Mahavira Vardhamana a prince born in a ksatriya family of Vaisali became one such sojourner for truth, the path laid down by whom had later been travelled by unending number of pilgrims striving to attain fulfilment. The lives of these great beings were like lamps which helped the ignition of many new ones and illuminated and glorified many others adding brightness and lusture to the diversely composed culture of this country. The whole of the country became a world experimenting in fraternal existence by persons following various religious beliefs and different ways of thinking and meditation.

Though vestiges of Jainism have become scarce in Bengal now and most of the families in Bengal professing Jainism are here for the last three hundred years, ancient Jaina literature is in evidence that the teachings of the Jinas were not altogether unknown in this part of India in the remote past. *Ayārāṅga Sūtta*, one of the earliest sources of Jaina tradition holds that Mahavira travelled widely in the pathless countries of the Ladha (Radha, West Bengal) through Vajjabhumi and Subbhabhumi, before he attained *kevala* knowledge.[1] A tradition recorded in the *Kathākoṣa* written in the 9th century A.D., states that the well known Jaina saint Bhadrabahu, reputed as the spiritual guide of the Maurya emperor Candragupta, the grandfather of Asoka was born at Devikot in northern Bengal, also known as Kotivarsa, identified with modern Bangarh in West Dinajpur district. A sect among Jainas in eastern India was known after Godasa, a disciple of Bhadrabahu as Godasa-*gaṇa* accor-

[1] See present writer's 'Jaina Images in Bengal' in *Indian Culture*, Vol. VI, 1939.

ding to the *Kalpa Sūtra*. This sect was in course of time divided into four different subsects namely the Kotivarsiya, the Pundravardhaniya, the Tamraliptiya and the Kharvatiya assuming their names from ancient place names of Bengal. Of the two great religious reformers of India Gautama Buddha and Mahavira Vardhamana, whose teaching have moulded the lives of millions of people in the country, the former is not known to have come to Bengal, nor do we find any of his early disciples having anything to do with this part of the country. On the other hand parts of Bengal were sanctified by the sacred foot falls of Mahavira and the traditions associated with Bhadrabahu and Godasa prove close association of Bengal with the preachings of Jainism from a very early age. Long ago, when Dr. Bhandarkar observed that 'while Bihar and Kosala were taken by Buddha and his adherents, Bengal was selected by Mahavira and his followers for their proselytising activities', he probably made a very correct statement regarding the relative progress of the two faiths towards the east. In fact, it has been suggested by some scholars that Bengal, which was not much favoured by the rest of northern India, from cultural point of view, had been Aryanised through the influence of Jainism. Whether Bengal was considered outside the pale of Aryandom as some scholars believe from the evidence of the *Aitareya Araṇyaka* there is little doubt that Jainism had helped in bringing Bengal closer to the rest of the country.

Bengal's association with Jainism in the remote past is not only traced from literary traditions alone, there are enough archaeological evidences to trace this association from as early as the 5th century A.D. A copper plate inscription dated in the year 159 of the Gupta era records existence of a Jaina establishment at or near the site where later a large Buddhist monastery and temple were built by the well known Pala emperor, Dharmapala. This inscription has information about the installation of the figure of a Jina or Tirthankara at the place. Yuan Chwang, the celebrated Chinese Buddhist pilgrim while travelling through eastern India during the 7th century A.D. learnt about the existence of numerous Jaina Nirgranthas in different parts of Bengal.

These evidences are enough to tell about the existence of a very strong Jaina tradition in Bengal from a very early age. Unfortunately however, very few relics relating to Jainism are now extant from this early period. It is a pity again that the literary evidences constituting bulk of information pertaining to the existence of Jainism in Bengal begin to get scarce with the passage of time. In fact literary sources become virtually silent about the condition of Jainism in Bengal for some time till we get some information about Jainism in the *Kathākoṣa* a text of about the 9th cen-

tury A.D. Strikingly enough, a number of Jaina images have been brought to light from different parts of Bengal, almost all of which can be attributed to about the 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

In fact this was a period of great artistic efflorescence in Bengal, a period of vigorous activity in the fields of building temples, making images and illustrating manuscripts, that have enormously enriched the cultural traditions of the country. At this time the Palas were ruling in Bengal, a dynasty that owed their allegience to the Buddhist faith but were certainly of a liberal disposition. If the sculptures surviving from this period are any indication of the strength of the different religious groups among the people, undoubtedly Brahmanism was the most dominant creed. Buddhism and Jainism were two monastic orders and Buddhist images have been found mainly from Buddhist monastic establishments while Brahmanical temples could spring up at any place. The comparative scarcity of Buddhistic images is probably due to the monastic base of such images. Yuan Chwang noticed large number of monasteries in the different cities visited by him in Karnasuvarna, Samatata and Tamralipta and other regions of Bengal. At all these places he noticed numbers of Jaina Nirgranthas as well. The Palas being patrons of Buddhism, images of Buddhist affiliation were quite expected from Bengal and little attention was given to the recovery of images if there were any, of Jaina affiliation. Among the only authorities taking any note of Jaina remains in Bengal mention may be made of Sri Kalidas Dutta of Jainagar Majilpur, who had brought to light several Jaina images of North Bengal as well as Sunderban areas. According to the *Kathākoṣa* Kotivarsa and Pundravardhana in North Bengal, Tamralipta in the South and Kharvata were the four places that had contributed their names to the four Godasa-*gaṇa* sects of Jainas in Bengal. Naturally Jaina images could be found from North Bengal where Kotivarsiya and the Pundravardhaniya sects flourished. Jaina remains could consequently be also expected from Tamralipta and Radha areas and as a matter of fact recent explorations have resulted in the recovery of a good few Jaina images proving that Jainism was quite widespread all over different parts of Bengal during the Pala period.

Writing as early as 1939 in the *Indian Culture* the present writer had drawn attention of interested persons to the Jaina images known at that time from different parts of Bengal. Some of the figures were already noticed by Sri Kalidas Dutta and a few were collected by the Ashutosh Museum. Since then several more images have come to light. Broadly affiliated to the Eastern School of Mediaeval style the Jaina images mostly representing different Tirthankaras reveal a suppleness of form and a restrain and distinctiveness of their own. For convenience's sake the Jaina



Twin Tirthankara, Raina, Burdwan



Rsabhanatha, Manbhum (Bronze)



Caumukha, Purulia

sculptures found from different parts of Bengal may be classified under three distinct types : (a) the sculptures showing single Tirthankaras as the chief object of display with various accessory figures by the sides of the principal figures, (b) *caumukha* shrines with four figures shown on four sides, (c) tablets showing two figures of Tirthankaras side by side.

The earliest Jaina figure noticed in Bengal, an image of Rsabhanatha, the first of the twentyfour Tirthankaras, was found from a place called Surohar near Rajshahi and is now in the collection of the Varendra Research Society Museum, Rajshahi. Upon a large stela the perfectly poised image of the Tirthankara sits cross legged in the *dhyāna* pose on a *simhāsana* with hands resting upon the soles of his feet. Completely nude, he wears the *urṇā*, *uṣṇiṣa* and wheel marks upon the palm and soles of his feet, the well known *mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇas* equally shared by the Buddhists and the Jainas for representation upon the figures of the Buddha and Tirthankaras. The style of sitting and other accourtrements are strongly reminiscent of the seated Jaina figures from Mathura, a pose not very commonly met with in case of the numerous Tirthankara figures. Even the fly whisk bearing figures shown on two sides of the seated Tirthankara and the flying Gandharvas on two sides of the *prabhāmaṇḍala* speak of the influence of Mathura style. The usual pose most universally favoured for the display of the Tirthankaras is the *kāyotsarga* pose, a pose peculiar to and distinctive of the Jaina Tirthankaras alone. While to the pose of the seated *yogi* had its prototype in the famous so called Siva Pasupati seals found from the Harappan sites, some scholars have noticed the archetype of the *kāyotsarga* pose in the standing nude statuette found from Harappa. A bronze figure of Parsvanatha now in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay showing close similarities to the Harappan statuette and having physiognomical characteristics traced from primitive traditions probably indicate a truly ancient origin of the pose while a torso found from Lohanipur in Patna and belonging to about the 1st century A.D. confirms this suggestion. The state of inaction and inward concentration both in seated as well as in the standing pose have been cultivated as means of meditation probably from Pre-Buddhist and Pre-Jaina age. In art, however, different creeds tried to evolve different modes in order to realise the state of meditation in order to stress upon the distinctiveness of their respective ways of thinking. Thus the Buddhists in order to show the way of meditation preferred the seated pose while the Jainas opted chiefly for the standing *kāyotsarga* pose. But it is apparent that there had been little difference in the totality of their respective outcome. Both were intended for the realization of the ultimate end, the deliverance from the pains of existence and the attainment of the final bliss of an eternal and ever sustaining nature.

The Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University has now become the most important habitat of Jaina images found from different parts of Bengal. Writing in 1939 the present writer could notice only one figure of Rsabhanatha from Mandoil in Rajshahi in the collection of the Asutosh Museum. It is an excellent figure in the *kāyotsarga* pose with highly sensitive and graceful form. Unfortunately its head has been struck off with some sharp weapon leaving traces of graceful locks of hair falling upon the shoulders. On two sides of the main figure shown in high relief there are two attendant figures and the nine Grahas with Ganesa in miniature form distributed above the two attendant figures.

Since the figure was collected for the Museum by Prof. S. K. Saraswati several figures of Rsabhanatha were collected showing that the first of the Tirthankaras was held in great popularity in Bengal. These figures were found from Manbhum, Midnapur and Burdwan. An extremely sensitive figure with *uṣṇīṣa* and curling hair, truncated at the waist found from Bhadrakali in Hooghly shows a nude bust with straight arms stretched downwards strongly suggesting the *kāyotsarga* pose. This figure now in the Asutosh Museum is also probably to be identified as a Jaina Tirthankara.

Of the *caumukha* shrines there are two specimens in the Asutosh Museum, one small specimen from Dolgaon in West Dinajpur and another, a large piece from Deulia in Burdwan. On the four sides of the shrine from Burdwan there are four figures in *kāyotsarga* pose, who are identifiable from their *lāñchanas* the bull, the moon, the snake and the lion as Rsabhanatha, Candraprabha, Parsvanatha and Mahavira the first, the eighth, the twentythird and the last of the Tirthankaras respectively. The figures are quite well contained in their vertically arranged spaces upon the sides of the shrine, austere and commanding as if viewing all the four quarters around them with an unfailing grip and careful vigilance. The *caumukha* shrines are found at different Jaina establishments and were held in worship as symbolic of the Tirthankaras in the act of preaching. Some Jaina scholars like Dr. U. P. Shah think that the *caumukha* shrines developed from the idea of *samavasaraṇa* or preaching of a Tirthankara after the attainment by him of the *kevala* knowledge. The idea of *caumukha* shrine corresponds to the four faced Buddhist miniature *stūpas* enshrining four figures of the Buddha in the act of preaching. The *samavasaraṇa* according to the Jaina tradition has got a very interesting significance to note. According to Hemacandra, Indra had a *samavasaraṇa* built for Rsabhanatha providing him suitable place for preaching after he had attained the *kevala* knowledge. Entering the *samavasaraṇa* the Master took his seat on a lion throne and the Vyantara gods who

were entrusted with all necessary arrangements, made three life like images of the Lord and placed those in the other three directions so that every one present to hear him could see him face to face. In the *caumukha* shrines referred to above four different Tirthankaras are however found facing the four directions. Even if the original idea had come from the *samavasaraṇa* as described by Hemacandra, later the *caumukha* shrines certainly had moved far from the original idea and came to correspond to similar Brahmanical concepts showing figures of four Brahmanical deities on four sides of similar shrines.

Images of Tirthankaras other than Rsabhanatha are also not unknown in Bengal. The collection of the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal has in their collection an image of the 16th Tirthankara, Santinatha from Rajpara, District Midnapur.[2] Standing in the usual *kāyotsarga* pose the figure stands in the middle of the stela with two *cauri*-bearing figures on two sides and the nine Grahas arranged in two groups above them. The *lāñcchana*, an antelope, is shown upon the pedestal. The figure as its style suggests belonged to the early part of the 10th century A.D. A stela from Bahulara in Bankura shows a stately figure of Parsvanatha bedecked with the canopy of snake hoods.

One small tablet collected from Raina in Burdwan, and now in the Asutosh Museum shows figures of two Tirthankaras side by side. One of the figures represents Candraprabha as would be evident from the crescent moon shown upon his pedestal. The badly damaged *lāñcchana* of the other comes to no help for its identification. This stone tablet has similarity to the tablet showing the figures of Rsabhanatha and Mahavira now in the British Museum and was very probably collected from Bengal.

No body will fail to notice the unparalleled grace of the bronze figure of Rsabhanatha in the Asutosh Museum collected from Manbhum. So far as the knowledge of the present writer goes, this is the only bronze image of any Jaina Tirthankara found from Bengal. In style and characterisation the figure bears affinity to the bronzes found from Kakatpur in Orissa and now to be found in the Indian Museum. It is quite probable that bronzes also had attained considerable maturity in Bengal and more of such bronze figures may be found in course of time.

The Jaina images of Bengal undoubtedly present a definite problem· There being no earlier specimen of Jaina art available to us, 9th and 10th

[2] *A Bulletin of the Directorate of Archaeology*, West Bengal, No. 1, fig. 25.

century specimens suddenly put us face to face with a well advanced iconography and an artistic achievement of highly matured type. Naturally, Jaina and Buddhist art in Bengal followed the same course. Both religious orders flourished in monastic seclutions and monastic establishments developed with the accumulation of grants and properties. The Paharpur inscription informs us of a like establishment flourishing at Vata Gohali. This inscription also specifically mentions of the installation of an image of a Tirthankara at this place. Such Jaina establishments were flourishing in north, west and south of Bengal during the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. There were similar Buddhist monasteries in Bengal and some old Jaina establishments were replaced by Buddhist monasteries as would be evident from the Buddhist monastery of Paharpur. But all old Jaina establishments might not have been replaced by Buddhist monasteries and some new establishments might have also come to flourish during the reign of the Palas who were certainly quite liberal in their outlook. Along with the Palas Buddhism had made a great headway in Bengal and Bihar. Taranath, the Tibetan historian mentioned the names of many Buddhist monasteries existing in eastern India. But during the same time Brahmanism also was making great strides. There was certainly no clash between Buddhism and Brahmanism, otherwise the large number of images surviving from the Pala period could not have been possible. The numerous Jaina images belonging also to this period speak of tolerance on the part of different religious orders which were existing side by side in Bengal who were staunch followers of the Brahmanical creed. There is no evidence to prove any persecution on the part of the Senas upon religious creeds other than Brahmanism but historically speaking both religious orders based on monastic establishments probably had suffered with the rise of this new power. The survival of the Brahmanical religion, however, could not sustain the art tradition of the Pala age for long. Already during the Sena period sculpture was becoming heavy and baroque. But Jaina tradition had not suffered this decay. Whatever Jaina sculpture have survived in Bengal speak of a very lively idiom, rich in concentrated animation. Inspite of the austerity inherent in the creed, the art reveals a purposeful attitude towards life. Warm and vigorous in its appeal the Bengal idiom of Jaina sculpture is definitely different from the styles that flourished elsewhere. Specimens of Jaina art found from Bengal though very few as compared to sculptures belonging to Buddhist or Brahmanical creed will certainly remain as some of the best ever produced by the adherents of the Jaina creed. Bengal will always have these specimens as a proud heritage in the field of art, works of master artists capable of infusing life and rhythm unto the hard body of stone.

Traces of Jainism in Bengal

DEVA PRASAD GHOSH

Jainism the Earliest Religious Force in Bengal

Jainism like Buddhism originated in Bihar. Magadha is the holiest place of Jainism, as the majority of the Tirthankaras were either born or died here. Still Jainism does not appear to have flourished in the Magadha proper. Inspite of the fact that some of the holiest places of Jainism like Pavapuri and Campanagar were situated in Magadha, the predominant religion of the area was Buddhism. This accounts for the paucity of Jaina images and temples in Magadha or South Bihar.

On the other hand evidences, both literary and archaeological, prove beyond doubt that ancient Bengal, specially the northern and western portions were the stronghold of Jainism upto the 10th century A.D. That in the 7th century A.D. Pundravardhana (North Bengal), Karna Suvarna and Samatata (West and Lower Bengal) continued to be dominated by the Nirgranthas in contrast to the Buddhist holy land of Magadha, is attested by the great Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang. From his accounts too it may easily be inferred that adjacent areas of Bengal, viz., Kie-Ching-Kie-lo (Kajangala-Rajmahal) and the wild tracts of Santhal Parganas and Jharkhand were given to Jaina worship even in that remote age. We have a 'set of Jaina tradition which show that North Bengal and a portion of lower Bengal had contributed to the establishment of the Jaina religion already before the 2nd century B.C.' Bhadrabahu, the famous author of *Kalpa Sūtra*, a contemporary of Candragupta Maurya, is said to have been an inhabitant of Radha of Western Bengal. 'According to tradition Godasa, a disciple of Bhadrabahu was responsible for the foundation of a school called Godasa-*gaṇa* which had in course of time four *śākhās*, three of which are called Tamraliptiya, Kotivarsiya and Paundravardhaniya'[1] ; they grew up in the Tamluk, Dinajpur and Rajshahi regions in lower and northern Bengal, and in Bangladesh.

[1] Majumdar, R. C., *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca, pp. 409-10.

Early Jaina Art and Architecture of Bengal

The above literary and religious traditions regarding northern and western Bengal being the stronghold of Jainism and adjacent Bihar districts specially Manbhum, Singhbhum, Ranchi and part of Hazaribagh coming under its orbit is buttressed by indisputable and significant archaeological evidences in shape of inscriptions, scores of stone and brick temples and hundreds of images scattered throughout this Jaina cultural zone of eastern India.

Recent archaeological discoveries have yielded multiple records bearing testimony of the sway of Jainism over early Bengal, which showed no signs of decay till the Pala-Sena period. The influence of Jainism was checked only with the rise of Buddhism and Brahmanism in the 8th century A.D. For example the Paharpur (Dt. Rajshahi, Bangladesh) Copper Plate of 478 A.D. testifies to the existence of a Jaina *vihāra* at the place as early as the fifth century A.D. Some other remarkable early mediaeval images from North Bengal (now in Rajshahi Museum), majority of sculptures and temples still found in the western districts of Birbhum, Bankura, Burdwan, Midnapur and 24-Parganas belonging to the period between the 7th and 11th centuries A.D. betray Jaina allegiance. The earliest brick and stone temple of Bengal, viz., Siddhesvara at Bahulara, Dt. Bankura (10th century A.D.) and temple No. IV at Begunia, Dt. Burdwan (c. 8th century A.D.) seem to have served as the prototypes of similar contemporary and later structures in Purulia, Manbhum, Singhbhum, Ranchi and outlying areas.[2] The discovery of several early mediaeval Jaina images in the precinct of the Bahulara temple and the Harmasra temple, also in the Bankura district, lead one to suppose that originally they were dedicated to Jaina worship. Similar may be the case with two other ruined stone temples of Bankura of c. 10th century A.D., viz., Saresvara and Sallesvara.[3] Excavation of some monumental stone images of Jaina Tirthankaras within the enclosure of the only early standing brick temple of Deuliya, Dt. Burdwan almost contemporary with Bahulara lead to the inescapable conclusion that it too was Jaina. Besides, the figure of Jina Parsvanatha, found at Deulbhira Bankura of the 10th century A.D. now preserved in the Indian Museum other rare metal and stone images of the 9th and 10th centuries[4] from Katwa, Ujani etc. preserved in the Asutosh Museum and Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum point to wide

[2] Banerjee, R. D., *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, pls. LXXXV-LXXXVI.

[3] *Ibid.*, pls. LXXXI, LXXXIV.

[4] *History of Bengal*, fig. 85.

prevalence of Jainism in the Burdwan district. Not only the few early surviving temple structures in West Bengal are almost exclusively Jaina in character but the cult also flourished in the Sunderban area of 24 Parganas. Numerous finely executed Jaina stone and bronze images discovered in the dense jungles of Sunderban from the Khari and Chatarbhag region, from Nalgora and Kantabenia, including several others of the late Pala period (10th-11th century A.D.) in the Asutosh Museum collection, conclusively prove that Jainism continued to be a potent force along with Buddhism and Brahmanism in the once flourishing Janapadas of Sunderban, now wild and forlorn.

Archaeological Remains in Purulia, Manbhum, Singhbhum and Adjacent Areas.

Discussing about the influence of Jainism in Bihar Sri R.D. Banerjee observes in the *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, pp. 144-45 to the following effect :

'During the last twentyfive years I have had occasion to visit many of the important sites in Chota Nagpur Division in the districts of Ranchi, Manbhum and Singbhum, the antiquities of which do not appear to have been properly described. In these districts, which now support a thriving population on account of the prosperity of the coal industry, there are numerous stone built temples and thousands of mutilated Jaina images lie scattered about the region. The temples of this style begin really from Barakar and Dhanbad and end in the jungle tracts of the Rewa State and the Orissa Feudatory States. Their position indicates that there must have been at one time a dense population in this part of the country who were worshippers of the Jinas ; because in all these places Jaina images abound, while Brahmanical temples and images are very few and far between. Buddhist images are never found in this area and what Brahmanical images exist today or are worshipped, belong to the late mediaeval or the Mohammedan period. In Mohammedan histories this tract is included in the very wide term Jharkhand, which was used to denote the jungle country. In the early days of British occupation before the cession of the districts of Benares, Kora and Allahabad to the East India Company, the Chota Nagpur Districts along with Sasaram and Palamau formed what was known as the South-Eastern Frontier of the Hon'ble East India Company's territories, beyond which lay the territories of the Bhonsles of Nagpur. The Jaina image of the Chota Nagpur district betrary a distinct affinity to the specimens of the Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculptures, but there is a good deal of difference among them on account of the material used. Flint, basalt, close-

grained standstone and mica-schist are very rarely used. The images which are generally found in the Manbhum and Singbhum districts are made of the very coarse-grained sand-stone or the schistose rocks which are locally obtainable. The Jaina zone of influence appears to have extended from the south bank of the Ganges and the western bank of Bhagirathi right up to the northern frontier of the jungle country, where the wild Gonds live and which is the province of Gondwana proper. All of these Jaina images are nude, i.e., they belong to the Digambar sect of the Jainas. It is no less significant that these Jaina images are still worshipped by the local Saraks a corruption of the term Sravaka.

'The Jaina images discovered in the Manbhum and Singbhum districts include splendid specimens which were found in a village called Chatra close to the town of Purulia, the headquarters of the district of Manbhum. In this village, the majority of inhabitants speak Bengali and the aboriginal inhabitants have also adopted Hinduism as their faith. Large ruins of Jaina temples exist in this village and their materials have been used in the construction of the modern temple of Siva at this place. We find Jaina images used in the decoration of the front facade of this temple which could not have been built before the 17th century.' These images include Vardhamana's father and mother, Santinatha, monumental figures of Parsvanatha and Rsabhanatha and large number of *caturmukhas* which may be ascribed to the 10th-11th centuries A.D.

Apart from the village of Chatra (Charra) the entire Manbhum and Purulia districts of Bihar and West Bengal respectively are full of ruins of old Jaina temples and sculptures, many of them now appropriated as Hindu places of worship and the images of the nude Jaina Tirthankaras being worshipped as Hindu divinities. Mr. Beglar of the Archaeological Survey of India in course of his tours in 1872 describes these remains as either Jaina or Buddhist. There cannot be a shred of doubt that majority of these antiquarian remains belonged to the Jaina sect. Old temples and early mediaeval stone images of Tirthankaras survive at Balarampur. It is also quite natural that all the three large brick temples, perhaps of Saivite origin, and several stone temples at Boram proclaim their close affinity with the Bengali temples in Bankura and Barakar. Special attention may be drawn here to the fact, that irrespective of religious affiliation all the ancient temples and images of Manbhum, Singbhum, etc. betray strong influence of the art of Bengal, early or mediaeval. 'The stone temples at Chatna and Harmashra and the Begunia temples at Barakar show very great affinity to the Jaina temples in the several districts of the Chota Nagpur Division have not been completely surveyed as yet. Most of them originally Jaina temples, which were gradually appropriated for

Brahmonical worship, but the shape is unmistakable and the four temples at Begunia display distinct affinity to the Chota Nagpur group.' Therefore it is not surprising that one of the ruined brick temples at Boram echoes the brick temple of Siddhesvara at Bahulara in Bankura, as regards structural peculiarities, sculptural arrangement and decorative detail. On these grounds it can also be plausibly assigned to the 10th century A.D.[5] A stone image of Mahisamardini (c. 8th century A.D.) on the other hand betrays palpable influence of the early Bengal type of sculpture.[6] Similarly the group of temples at Budhpur which like Boram is also situated on the Kasai river, betrary close architectural affinities with the Barakara temples. Dalmi on the bank of the Suvarnarekha, features ruins of a large number of brick temples of about the 10th century showing obvious relationship with contemporary Bengal temples. Some of the Dalmi sculptures resemble the finds at Boram. Beglar opines that there was a large Jaina establishment here in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. succeeded say about the 11th century by Hinduism.[7]

Traces of ruins of numerous temples and other buildings, recalling the Barakar type, have been noticed in Katrasgarh. Not far off, on both the banks of Damodar, at Chechgaongarh, marking the site of a large Jaina religious establishment there are extensive ruins containing traces of about 16 temples, large and small, including a large stone image of Tirthankara of about the 10th century A.D. The temples recall the structural form of neighbouring Radha sculptures showing simultaneous influence of the same. Large ruins of temples can also be seen at Pabanpur in Barabhum, a finely executed Jaina carving of about the 10th century A.D. collected from the same place is now preserved in the Indian Museum. A magnificent image of Rsabhanatha standing within a Rekha shrine from Jhalda, District Purulia, of the 11th century A.D. has been collected for the Asutosh Museum only last year. From the votive offerings too, secured from the region the Jaina character of the remains are apparent. The same affiliation is noticeable in the numerous statues and sculptures and temples at Pakbirra and Para. To Telkupi on the Damodar, however, goes the credit of having 'perhaps the finest and largest number of temples within a small place that is to be found anywhere in Chota Nagpur.' Although most of the remains appear to be Brahmanical, according to Beglar, some of them are undoubtedly Jaina including remains of a large brick monastery. It is interesting to note that Barakar type of temple have apparently influenced the construction and elevation

[5] *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, pls. LXXVI.
[6] Beglar, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, Vol. VII.
[7] N. K. Bose, *Ibid.*, pl. 420.

of the Telkupi monuments to a remarkable extent. Even in the post-Mohammedan period, the brick temples erected by the Panchet Raja on the Panch Kot Hill near Raghunathpur in 17th century, reproduce all the characteristic features of contemporary brick temples at Visnupur in Bankura in form and sculptural decoration of the wall surface.

The importance of all the old sites in Manbhum and Purulia, with extensive ruins to mark their former glory, lay in their strategic situation along the river valley of Subarnarekha, Kasai and Damodar, on ancient highways connecting Tamluk (Tamralipta) with Patna (Pataliputra), Gaya, Rajgir and Benares in the north and west. Beglar who comprehensively studied these routes in 1862-63, traces regular lines of communication between (1) Tamluk to Patna via Ghatal, Vishnupur and Chatna Raghunathpur, Telkupi, Jharia, Rajauli and Rajgir ; and (2) a direct route between Tamluk and Benares via Pakbirra, Buddhpur, Dalmi, Ranchi and Palamau where also there are remains. Ruins at Balarampur, Charra, Para, Chechgaongarh and Katras mark sites on the cross-roads connecting the main Benares and Gaya routes. A careful study of the geographical and historical factors underlying the growth of temple architecture in ancient days in Manbhum and Purulia will bring into relief the predominating influences operating upon them specially the overwhelming Jaina religious force and the peculiar Bengali architectural and sculptural idiom both emanating from Tamralipti and Radha.[8]

[8] *Manbhum District Gazetteer*, 48-50.

A Survey of Jaina Antiquarian Remains in West Bengal

D. K. CHAKRAVARTY

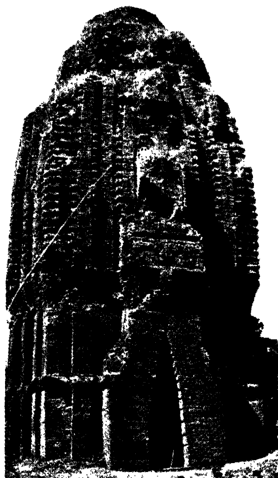
It is proud privilege for us that Lord Mahavira, the last among the Tirthankaras had some association with our State and from the narratives recorded in the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* it is gathered that Mahavira's sojourn in the Lodha country representing the ancient geographical division of Radha and comprising the western districts of the present State of West Bengal was an important event in his career. The land through which Mahavira traversed was stated to be covered with forests and jungles and he was not properly received by its inhabitants speaking in an alien tongue (non-Aryan) and who meted out inhospitable treatment to him. The physiographical features as observed in some of the western districts of West Bengal like Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur present the same topographical feature and climatic condition as revealed during the journey of Mahavira through the 'pathless land' covered by arid lands, stony wastes, rugged hillocks and Sal jungles and yet this uninviting condition both of the land and the people could not damp the ardour of the proselytizing spirit of Mahavira and his disciples. A rapid survey of the numerous relics and edifices associated with Jainism as noticed or discovered in the abovementioned districts of West Bengal in particular amply demonstrates that Jainism made much headway in this land after the death of Mahavira and made an everlasting influence upon its inhabitants who accepted this faith for their salvation. Though we cannot boast of in having in our State the stupendous monuments like Palitana, Dilwara and Khajuraho, or the unpretentious cave shrines like Udayagiri orKhandagiri in the neighbouring State of Orissa, yet the ruined temples, architectural fragments and sculptures as noticed in the interior villages and *devasthānas* remind us that Jainism had its day in ancient times and there are reasons to believe that some of the extant monuments representing the temples at Bahulara, Paresnath and Ambikanagar in Bankura district were originally Jaina temples which were later on converted to Saiva and Sakta shrines due to the rising popularity of the Brahmanical faith in course of centuries.

While tracing the spread and ascendancy of Jaina religion in West Bengal it is interesting to note a Jaina tradition recorded in the *Kathākoṣa* written in the 9th century A.D. wherein it has been stated that the well-known Jaina saint Bhadravahu, the spiritual guide of the Maurya Emperor

Candragupta was born at Devikot, also known as Kotivarsa, identified with modern Bangarh in West Dinajpur district. Although these traditions link up our association with Jainism since the time of Mahavira down to the time of the Mauryas, yet there are no sufficient archaeological relics belonging to this period which can corroborate such traditions about the existence of Jainism in West Bengal. It is plausible that like all other schools of religious art, Jainism as practised in those days did not involve the worship of images at the very beginning of its art history, but from the observance of some symbols carved on the tympanum of the Udayagiri Caves in Orissa and Ayagapatas from Mathura it is evident that the worship of symbols like the Buddhists was the contemporary religious practice among the masses. It is however not improbable that some of the symbols on the silver-punch-marked coins which gained wide currency throughout India during the time of the Mauryas have definitely got some religious association and the symbols like *svastika* and its variants and the *yugmamīna* (a pair of fish) stuck on the silver punch-marked coins from Lohapur in Birbhum district, West Bengal, and other parts of India are perhaps to be connected with the Jaina *aṣṭamaṅgalas* (eight auspicious signs).

Barring a solitary epigraphic record of the Gupta period from Paharpur now in Rajshahi district, East Bengal, revealing about the existence of a Jaina establishment where a figure of a Jina was installed, archaeological evidence remains scanty and rather rare to prove about the existence of Jainism in this part of India. Such was the state of affairs in the country, until we come to the reign of the Palas. Under the benign patronage of the Pala rulers and specially during the ninth-tenth centuries A.D. there began a feverish activity in temple building with the desire of decorating these shrines with innumerable sculptures and decorative friezes symbolising different cult icons and other sculptural representations of various divinities associated with different religious order, and it has been observed from our survey that most of Jaina relics appertain to this period.

The explorations and survey of antiquarian remains conducted by the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal, in the districts of Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur have brought to light many sculptural representations of the Tirthankaras being associated with the various *pārśvadevatās* and attending figures, a few *caturmukha* or *caumukha* miniature votive shrines, images of the *śāsanadevis*, sometimes associated with their respective male *yakṣa* counterparts. It is a pity and a matter of regret for us that most of the sculptural pieces and architectural fragments associated with Jaina religious order are now lying in a neglected condition and



Brick Temple, Sat Deuliya, Burdwan



Fragments of Jaina Sculptures of Pareshnath village, now under Kangsavati Dam, lying uncared for in a field near by



jealously guarded and venerated by the un-sophisticated villagers as cult divinities of the Brahmanical faith, sometimes identified by them with the image of the Buddha. The dilapidated shrines, but yet modest in appearance, noticed at such places like Deoli, Pakbirra, Sanka and Senara in Purulia district or at Paresnath, Ambikanagar, Kendua, Barkola, Harmashra and Bahulara in Bankura district and the ruins at Rajpara in Midnapur district speak about the modest and sincere attempts made by the temple builders of Bengal. The elegant brick temples, one at Bahulara in Bankura district not far away from Onda Railway Station and the other at Satdeulia near Memari Railway Station in Burdwan district, are perhaps the two earliest Jaina temples now standing within this State. With their lofty *śikhara* carved with ornamental bricks these temples present a pleasing appearance amidst the rural surroundings, and it can be surmised that there were many more of such Jaina temples located in the western part of our State, which were later on converted to Saiva or Sakta shrines or deserted altogether.

Let us now recount some of the archaeological objects or relics noticed or discovered by us during our exploratory activities and for a matter of convenience we may begin our itinerary from the western part of Midnapur district to further beyond westwards upto the present territorial limit of West Bengal.

Situated in an interior village of Jhargram subdivision of Midnapur district at Rajpara under Belpahari Development Block, two Jaina Tirthankaras were first noticed by the Directorate of Archaeology which were lying in a neglected state of preservation and were being worshipped as the 'Buddha' and 'Ananta'. The much abraded and weather beaten representation of the Tirthankara Santinatha with his usual ***lāñchana***, antelope, and flanked by the *cauri*-bearers and ***aṣṭagrahadevatās*** reveals a specimen which can be attributed to *circa* 10th century A.D. on stylistic ground. This has since been collected for display in the State Archaeological Gallery, West Bengal. The other mutilated specimen which is still lying at the site personifies the Tirthankara Parsvanatha standing in ***kāyotsarga*** pose having a canopy of a seven-hooded serpent over his head.

If we travel northwards towards Bankura by following up the courses of the Kangsavati, the Silavati and the Darakeswar we come across with numerous Jaina religious settlements concentrated upon in some villages situated within Ranibandh, Khatra, Taldangra Police Stations and also at such places like Bahulara and Dharapat situated near Vishnupur ; all falling within the district of Bankura. From Ranibandh itself we have collected a medium sized sculptural representation possibly of the

Tirthankara Mahavira identified from the mutilated portion of the *lāñchana*, lion, and being flanked by the *aṣṭagrahadevatās* like that of the image of Santinatha described above. The village of Ambikanagar situated on the confluence of the Kangsavati and Kumari owing its name to its tutelary deity Ambika and now being worshipped as a Brahmanical deity after enshrinement in a modern brick temple built over the foundations of a stone temple of an earlier period and perhaps associated with the *śāsanadevī* Amra or Ambika conceals a Jaina place of pilgrimage as the reported findings of some Jaina images from its surroundings would testify. (Cf. "Some Jaina Antiquities from Bankura, West Bengal"—by Srimati Debala Mitra, in *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, 1958). From the village Barkola situated about 2½ miles east from Ambikanagar we have collected a beautiful image of the Sasanadevi Ambika standing on lotus with her *vāhana* lion while a child holds her left hand. Her Jina Neminatha the twenty second Tirthankara has been placed above her head in the centre. Two other miniature images each personifying a Tirthankara standing in *kāyotsarga* pose on a lotus flanked by an attendant on each side have also been acquired for our Gallery from the same village. The cognizance of one is either bull or *makara* indicating either Rshabhanatha or Subidhinatha, while the other is represented by his *lāñchana* elephant representing the Tirthankara Ajitanatha. One miniature votive temple depicting on each of its four faces the figure of a standing Tirthankaras perhaps giving an idea about the architectonic shape and other features of the contemporary architectural style of the extinct temple was also noticed by us at the same place. Now after moving across northwards by crossing the confluence of the Kumari and the Kangsavati we come across at the village Pareshnath, no doubt named after the shrine of the twenty-third Tirthankara Parsvanatha. Here one can observe a gigantic sculpture representing Parsvanatha (height 6′8½″) reduced to fragments which are now lying over the ruined plinth of the ancient temple. Nicely executed on the chlorite rock the sculpture presents a beautiful and bold representation of the Tirthankara flanked by the other Tirthankaras standing in groups. From further upstream in the Kangsavati valley at places like Kendua and Loadihi findings of Jaina antiquarian remains in the form of ruined temples and mutilated sculptural pieces have been reported. That the Jaina Tirthankara Parsvanatha was greatly venerated by the followers of Jainism specially of this district is corroborated from the presence of stone images of this deity enshrined in the temples at Bahulara and Dharapat situated near Vishnupur, and which are being worshipped in the name of Manasa, the snake-goddess. The seven hooded serpent canopy manifesting over the head of the Tirthankara has been wrongly taken by the local inhabitants as that of the *nāgacchatra* of Manasa.

Now we may cross over to Purulia district bordering on the State of Bihar. Situated not far away from the Sameta Sikhara of the Jaina tradition and identified with the Pareshnath Hill in Bihar where most of the Tirthankaras attained *nirvāṇa*, the ancient Manbhum attracted many a Jaina pilgrim and followers by whose munificence and patronage shrines were erected in later times. Except a few remains of the early mediaeval period earlier temples are now extinct. At Senara near Raghunathpur there is a ruined Jaina shrine now in complete ruins where a huge rock-sculpture carved out from schistoze rock and personifying a Tirthankara can be noticed. Not far away at village Sanka a beautiful image of a free-standing Tirthankara Rsabhanatha flanked by the groups of Tirthankaras is still being worshipped. The village Charra on way to Purulia in ancient times was a centre of religious activity for the Jainas is well attested from the numerous findings of Jaina sculptures and architectural pieces including the *caumukhas* which has been reported by R. D. Banerjee in his 'Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculptures'. A beautiful *caumukha* has been seen to be decorating a fountain situated at the entrance of the newly built Ramakrishna Mission Institute at Charra. From Jhalda we have collected a headless image of the Tirthankara Adinatha or Rsabhanatha with his *lāñchana*, bull, prominently shown. Further extreme in the Suvarnarekha valley at a village called Deoli situated near Suisa Railway Station a *pañcāyatna* shrine in ruins having a Tirthankara peeping through the fallen stone blocks have been noticed. But among all these remains pertaining to the Jaina religion, as noticed in Purulia district the ruins and relics still lying in a neglected condition at the village Pakbirra (Puncha P.S.) situated about 25 miles south-east from Purulia, the district headquarters, surely deserve some consideration for a brief description on account of its wealth of fine sculptural materials. Besides, the crumbling temples (only three stone temples are now standing in a very dilapidated condition) which occupy the area, the colossal figure of a Jaina Tirthankara (height nearly 7½') carved in round on chlorite locally being worshipped as Bhiram commands the respect and attention of the visitors.

The Tirthankara is standing in *kāyotsarga* pose on a low pedestal on which a lotus symbol is carved and is flanked by *cauri*-bearers on his two sides. From the *lāñchana* carved on the pedestal it seems that the sixth Jaina Tirthankara Padmaprabha has been represented in this sculpture. The towering figure standing straight by dedicating himself for the cause of humanity and keeping its head high above the surrounding ruins symbolises the spiritual exaltation amidst trials and tribulation in worldly life. The open shed in which the image described above has been noticed is also being used as a 'store-house' of numerous loose sculptures, some

having been badly mutilated. Quite a large number of the mutilated sculptures representing Jaina Tirthankara Adinatha were noticed which found huddled together. Two excellent specimens of miniature votive stone temples symbolising 'Rekha-Deul' in the niches of which Jaina Tirthankaras with their respective *lāñchanas* have been represented have been noticed. Two sculptures representing *yakṣas* and the *yakṣinis* also known as *upāsakas* or *śāsanadevatās* wrongly identified by Beglar as "Buddhist sculptures" are now lying in the open shed. The Jaina text *Pravacanasārodhāra* describes the *yakṣas* as devotees of the Tirthankara and they with their female counterparts are the principal attendants of the Jinas. There is also a free standing image personifying Amra or Ambika.

Two mutilated heads perhaps representing some of *śāsanadevis* have been collected for our Gallery which bespeak about the high quality of the sculptor who has deftly expressed his feelings recalling the Gupta artistic tradition. The dropping eyelids expressing a mood of deep thinking and the supple modelling of the face also exhibiting a sensuous feeling reveals the Jaina artistic heritage that flourished in this barren and stony-waste land of West Bengal.

Not far away there is another impoverished shed where some mutilated but beautiful sculptures are lying. Among them a sculpture representing the Tirthankara Parsvanatha recognised by his *lāñchana*, snake, flanked by two beautiful *cauri*-bearers emerging from the mouth of snakes is worth noting. Thus our survey is nearly complete which has demonstrated that in parts of West Bengal specially in its western districts there sprang up numerous Jaina religious centres which gave initiative and inspiration to the architects and sculptors and which in course of experiments and observations produced some of the beautiful monuments like the temples of Bahulara and Satdeulia typifying the temple architecture of West Bengal at its best.

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Siddhesvara Temple, Bahulara
(now occupied by a Sivalinga while the earlier image of Parsvanatha stands against the rear wall)



Sikhara Temple, Dharapat
(stone image of Parsvanatha converted into that of Vasudeva)



Biharinath, Bankura
(much abraded statue of Parsvanatha standing near modern Siva Temple)

Decline and Fall of Jainism in Western Bengal

AMIYA KUMAR BANERJI

According to Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhadarkar—a name to conjure with in the field of Indian historical research—Pracyadesa (which included most of ancient Bengal) was Aryanised by Jainism. He also states that Buddha and his disciples selected Bihar and Kosala for preaching their religion while Bengal was chosen by Mahavira and his followers for their proselytizing activities. The ancient Jaina texts like the *Acārāṅga Sūtra*, the *Kalpa Sūtra*, and the Buddhist texts like the *Bodhisattvāvadāna Kalpalatā* and the *Divyāvadāna* describe in details the first incursion of the faith in this eastern region as also its development into a mighty religion there over the succeeding centuries. It was no wonder that this should happen for in Magadha, immediately to the west of Bengal, most of the Jaina Tirthankaras lived and died and as many as twenty out of the twentyfour apostles of the Jaina faith are reported to have attained their salvation at Sammeta Sikhara the present-day Pareshnath Hills in the Hazaribagh district of Bihar adjacent to the western boundaries of modern Bengal. Such close proximity of the most important citadel of ancient Jainism naturally cast its spell on neighbouring Banga.

Inspite of this early hold on the primitive peoples of Bengal whom it firmly placed on the Aryan road to progress and civilization, Jainism, through a curious stroke of destiny, disappeared completely from its erstwhile seat of influence and power and has not been heard to as a religious force in this part of the country since about the 12th century A.D. The decline and fall of the Jaina faith and its total withdrawal from the Bengal area constitute an interesting field of study. To the careful field worker, many instances are not hard to find in this region which throw considerable light on the submergence of decaying Jainism under the waves of renascent Brahmanical Hinduism that had been gathering momentum on the Indian religious arena for quite some time and which burst forth at long last with such fury on the old order as to leave it throughly spent and exhausted. The present writer in course of his extensive travels in the Radha country poignantly illustrating this clash between the two creeds—one shorn of its former glory and in retreat and the other enveloping and absorbing its rival through the same gentle process of assimilation by which Hinduism has, over the ages, gathered unto its ample folds, in varying degrees, other religious concepts all over India.

In the extreme north-west corner of the present day Bankura district, there is a secluded temple of Siva on the northern slopes of the Biharinath hill which undoubtedly marks the place where a Jaina religious settlement had flourished long ago. The brick built modern shrine houses a *lingam* but in the courtyard are two significant images—one of a twelve-armed Visnu and the other of the Jaina Tirthankara Parsvanatha. The former is in a fairly good state of preservation leading to the belief that it was the reigning deity there prior to the installation of the Saivite emblem. The Jaina image is in an advanced stage of abrasion which could happen only through centuries of weathering. In this evidence, it seems very probable that Jainism had its hold on this site before Visnu worship took root there.

At Pareshnath (the name is significant), very near the place where the Kangsavati Dam has been built, unmistakable traces of an ancient Jaina settlement are still extant. The presence at this spot of Hindu images like that of the Surya, the Siva and his bull confirms that this seat of Jainism was also taken over by resurgent Hinduism in later times.

The quiet little village of Dharapat, some four miles to the north-west of Vishnupur, provides yet another example of the absorption of once-prevalent Jainism by more powerful Brahmanical Hinduism of succeeding ages. Here we find a fine *śikhara* temple dedicated to Krsna but on the walls of which are embedded a stone figure of Visnu (Vasudeva) and two images of Parsvanatha. Close by, there is another statue of the same Tirthankara which, at some unknown period, had been converted into an image of Vasudeva by carving out of the back-slab two additional hands holding the *cakra* (the wheel) and the *gadā* (the mace) which constitute two of the prescribed emblems associated with most Vasudeva images. All this iconographic evidence conclusively proves that this original seat of Jaina faith was successively used for Vasudeva and Krsna worship.

The best example of this assimilatory process is however, to be found at Bahulara in the interior of the Bankura district, famous for its magnicfient Siva temple. Recent excavations in the adjacent yard have exposed small brick-built *stūpas* which, on the analogy of the exactly similar structures found at Kankali Tila near Mathura, have been ascribed to the Jaina faith. The fact that a stone Parsvanatha image is still preserved in the sanctum of this shrine leaves no room for doubt that this erstwhile stronghold of Jainism also fell before Brahmanical onslaught of a subsequent period.

Instances like the above abound in the Radha area as also in the neighbouring Manbhum-Singbhum region which testify that until about the 12th century A.D. Jainism was fairly powerful in this part of the country but it yielded its place to a sister religion not through any violent skirmish but through that gentle process of assimilation which was characterised all the religious 'conquests' of Hinduism.

Jainism in Manbhum

P. C. Roy Choudhury

The message of Jainism was carried by Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, born on the soil of Bihar through Radhadesa to Utkala, modern Orissa. Radhadesa included the area previously known as the district of Manbhum and now a portion of which is known as Purulia district in West Bengal. Manbhum was the tract through which the commonly known road meandered to Puri, which has the temple of Jagannatha. In the course of his itinerary, Mahavira was roughly treated in Radhadesa which only went to strengthen his confidence in himself and with redoubled vigour, he accepted the challenge and spread the creed of Jainism in the same area.

The efforts of Mahavira were apparently crowned with success and as unknown to most of us, lie scattered, throughout this area, Jaina antiquities in abundance. The adjoining district of Singbhum in Bihar is also full of Jaina relics but it is peculiar that while some attention has been paid to the Jaina relics in Singbhum and the adjoining districts of Orissa upto the famous antiquities in Khandagiri caves, very little attention has been paid to these in Manbhum district. Vandalism has been responsible for the disappearance of many of the wonderful antiquities in Manbhum area. Quite a large number of them are being worshipped as orthodox Hindu deities. Some of them are even found on the door steps, the walls and parapets of houses, often besmeared with vermillion. In this short article some of these antiquities will be referred to with the fond hope that the attention of the proper authorities and scholars will be drawn to them.

These relics offer a field for investigation as to the periods to which the antiquities refer to and probably a scholar may discover valuable data for tracing the evolution of Jainism which spread through Manbhum to Orissa and from Orissa to the south. It is a mistake to think that Jainism has completely died out in this area. What has happened is that without their knowledge sizable sections of the population in different pockets are following Jaina creed – there are villages where *ahimsā* is concretely practised by villagers by being scrupulously vegetarian, there are places where people do not follow the usual casteism and so on. Another great effect of Jainism in this area appears to have been to iron out the differences amongst other creeds. Side by side of the Jaina antiquities in Manbhum area we find specimens of orthodox Hindu antiquity,

clear relics of Mahayana Buddhism and clear traces of Vaisnavism. Eclecticism appears to have been responsible for the area accepting one religious creed after another and the result is that there was a confluence of different faiths in Manbhum. There is no doubt that at one time or other Jainism had received a certain amount of patronage from the landed aristocracy which helped the spread of the creed. King Bimbisara, Kharavela, the lines of Rastrakuta and Candelas who had ruled these parts, were sympathetic to Jainism as a creed if not as active supporters. The section of people known as the Pacchima Brahmanas in Manbhum area held by some as belonging to the clan of Vardhamana Mahavira.

There was a decline of the flow of Jainism in this area and in adjoining Orissa and it is worthwhile for a research scholar to investigate the reasons. The rise of Lingayat Saivism appears to have clearly contributed to the decline of Jainism in Chota Nagpur. There is a theory that the Cola soldiers on their way to the expedition under Rajendra Cola Deva and on the return back after defeating Mahipala of Bengal near about 1023 A.D., had destroyed many of the Jaina temples and images in Manbhum district. The Pandyas were great iconoclasts. The decline of a powerful rule at the centre led to a fissiparous tendency and several small principalities came to be carved out and ruled by branches of the Rajputs. Landlords like Kasipur and Patkum were examples. Many of these rulers or powerful Zamindars were under the influence of Brahmana priests who wanted to increase their power and so there was a clash of interests. From the 13th century A.D., Manbhum seems to have been the field for different religious creeds trying to push out the other and if not to bring about a compromise and to continue the same influence. The religious ideas were fused and even when Tantrik Mahayana Saivism came to have some influence, the Jaina images came in handy. During the latter part of the Mughal period when the centre became very weak most of the religions excepting Mohammedanism all over India lost their individual identity and a broad based Hindu creed assimilating a number of creeds came to be the ruling creed on the surface. This creed took in Jainism as a current in the broader current. This is the reason probably why today one will find Jaina Tirthankara images openly worshipped as Bhaironath, Hara-Parvati, etc. The result is seen in the fact that today unmistakable Jaina images are found installed in Hindu temples and worshipped as Hindu deities.

As mentioned before, Jaina relics lie scattered in abundance through out Manbhum area. This is the area where the ancient Sravakas who were clearly Jainas, lived and practised the earliest known smelting of iron ore. Hiuen Tsang mentioned this area as the 'Safa Province'. The

origin of the name of Safa is not known, but it appears to be clearly associated with Jainism. Hibert had identified Dalmi as the capital of the Safa province and the entire Dalmi hills are full of Jaina antiquities. It is this province of Safa which is identified with a part of Radhadesa which was visited by Lord Mahavira.

Balarampur and Boram are two big villages near Purulia which have got temples with Jaina images and it appears these temples were Jaina in origin. From Candankiari village, a few miles away from Purulia a large number of Jaina antiquities were accidentally discovered. Some of the images of the Jaina Tirthankaras discovered in Candankiari form one of the finest collections of Indian antiquities now preserved in Patna Museum. Most of these images have clear Jaina *cinhas*. The date is of the 11th century A.D. A number of other Jaina images have been found at villages Kumahari and Komardaga within 5 miles of Candankiari. The temples and sculptures at Pakbirra about 32 miles from Purulia were identified by J.D. Beglar as of clear Jaina origin. Near the temples are a number of mounds which have not been excavated. There is no doubt that the entire area of Pakbirra was once the seat of Jaina culture, Even now a large number of Jaina images are lying here and one of the images is 5 cubit high of Padmaprabha. Near it are some other Jaina images of Parsvanatha, Mahavira, and Padmavati. The carvings are superb and the images are still in tact and may be about 200 years old.

The villages of Budhpur, Daruka and Charra have also a number of Jaina antiquities. At Charra there are still images which are clearly of Kunthunatha, Candraprabha, Dharanendra-Padmavati, Rsabhadeva and Mahavira. It is understood that quite a large number of images have been removed by the military people when they had a colony at Charra during the Second Great War.

The writer noticed at Deoli, an insignificantly small village, a number of very old Jaina temples. In the sanctum of the largest temple there is instituted a Jaina figure known as Aranatha. This figure is now worshipped by the Hindus. The main temple which is now in ruins consisted of a sanctum, *antarāla* and a *mahāmaṇḍapa*. Near about under the tree there is a Jaina figure in nudity with the serpent-hood above the head.

Another small village Suissa has a collection of statues that had been noticed by Beglar which is identified as of Jaina origin. Some of the Jaina antiquities mentioned by Beglar have now disappeared. At village Bhawanipur about 8 miles east of Purulia there is an image of Rsabhadeva

with 24 Tirthankaras engraved on the side with the figures of Camaris, incessors and Yaksis. An image of Padmavati and Dharanendra is now worshipped as Hara Parvati.

The wirter made a tour of Hura-Punca Road and within a distance of 24 miles dozens of Jaina images were noticed lying neglected in almost every village on this road. Many of them appeared to be worshipped as some member of the Hindu pantheon. Some figures were lying under trees.

It is necessary to give more examples. As a matter of fact, there are dozens of other villages in Purulia district which have got hundreds of Jaina antiquities, some broken and some in tact. Recently some inscriptions have been found which have to be properly deciphered and edited. The Jainas had raised beautiful temples at almost impossible places in the area and the Hindus and Jainas had lived together for centuries and made a great contribution to the culture of Manbhum district. Manbhum offers a very rich area for further exploration and investigation so far as Jainism is concerned.

Some Jaina Temples of Purulia

SUBHAS CHANDRA MUKHOPADHYAY

(i) *The Lone Temple of Tuisama*

Nearly a mile north west of the village Budhpur (Manbazar P. S., Purulia) and at the top of a table-land overlooking the murmuring Kansavati stands the forlorn temple of Tuisama. Hardly 15' in height this stone temple has *tri-ratha* walls, *bāda* and the *gaṇḍi* separated by a *baraṇḍa* with a small recess at the centre bordered by two projected hands. The central *paga* in the frontal side prominently projected above the doorway becomes oddly narrow towards the *śikhara* and it is entirely plain stone work. The only decoration in the *gaṇḍi* are the *bhūmi-āmlās*, four in number rudely cut on two *anupagas* or *konāpagas*. The walls of the *vimāna* form an abrupt curve near the *śikhara* and merge under the *beki*-wheel. The *bāḍa* is short-heighted and it is also plain. The silghtly projected doorway is rectangular in shape (3' in height at present, part of the lower portion is burried underground ; 2'10'' in breadth) and set in the temple wall like a picture-frame. Internally, the *garbhagṛha* is square with a low ceiling of flat stone-slab and curiously, it has on the right hand corner a number of steps leading to the upper chamber the purpose of which is uncertain, particularly, in the case of this small temple. However, this small and bulky temple of Tuisama, a rudimentary handiwork of the architects is perhaps the oldest temple-type in Purulia. There is no image inside the temple. But the construction and size of the *garbhagṛha* suggest that it once housed the image of a Jaina Tirthankara. This presumption may of course be hindered if we take into account the oblong stone-slabs standing half burried in a disarranged position on the ground facing the temple. These stone-slabs with *āmalakas* overhead have each on its body a small shallow niche wherein the image either of a four-armed male figure or a male figure in *dhyāni* or *samādhi* posture (Jaina Tirthankara image ?), the image of a Divine Couple or a dancing girl is carved in low relief. If these sculptured stones have any relation with the temple, it becomes very difficult to determine whether the temple belonged to the Jainas or the Hindus.

(ii) *Temples of Charra*

A group of Tuisama-type temples stood in the village Charra about six miles from Purulia on the Purulia-Barakar road. Originally this group consisted of seven temples built of stone as reported by Col. E. T. Dalton,

but he saw only two temples standing when he visited the place in 1864-5.6[1] The present author found only one temple standing when he surveyed the area in April, 1973.

So far as the basic structure is concerned the Charra temple is similar to its counterpart at Tuisama, but otherwise, there are clear signs of marked improvement in it. The temple of Charra is much slender in form and the curvilinear of the *vimāna* is gradual. The *beki* is slightly higher and the *āmalaka*-wheel is testifully moulded which matched with the total form of the structure.

The central *paga* of the *gaṇḍi* in the front side is built of plain stone broad and projected at the base and gradually becomes narrow as it rises towards the *śikhara*. Though this portion of the *gaṇḍi* is not oddly thick as the Tuisama temple, this particular feature of these temples is unartistic and ugly and mars the beauty of the otherwise pretty temple of Charra. Unlike the Tuisama temple, the *baraṇḍa* portion of Charra temple is less projected and the recess or *kāṇṭi* between two *khurā*-shaped mouldings has been reduced. As regards the wall decoration, the Charra temple has like the Tuisama temple, mouldings of *khurās* and of *bhūmi-āmlās* on the *anupages* and *konāpagas*. While the *anupagas* have only *khura*-shaped mouldings, the *konāpagas* had *bhūmi-āmlās* between a set of two *khurās*. Besides, there are *caitya*-motifs on the central *pagas* of the three side walls and smaller carvings of the same motif can be seen on the *anupagas* and *konāpagas*. The shallow and sketchy carvings of the *caitya*-motifs on the central *paga* in the front side appear to be incomplete in comparison to the fully developed and ornamented *caitya*-motifs in other sides. The most remarkable aspect of this temple is the use of lime mortar on the *beki* over which delicate carvings are noticed. W. W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Bengal*[2] observes that the stones are without cement, while Sri Anantaprasad Sastri informs us that there is a thin layer of cement between the stone masonry.[3] Though, apparently, the temple is of dry masonry, the use of mortar in the *beki* confirms the observation of Sri Sastri that mortar was used in the masonry work.

Though the walls of the *gaṇḍi* have five divisions, the *bāḍa* is *tri-ratha* with its surfaces entirely plain. The *pābhāga* has three mouldings of *khurā*, inverted *khurā* and *khurā* respectively. The *garbhagṛha* is 4'

[1] *JASB*, Part I, No. III, 1866, p. 187. (Notes on a Tour in Manbhoom, Col. E. T. Dalton).
[2] Vol. XVII, 1877, pp. 298-304.
[3] *JBORS*, Vol 5, Pt I, 1919, pp. 283-287.

square and its flat roof is 8′ high above which the internal portion is hollow. The entrance doorway is 4′10″ in length and 2′2″ in breadth. The height of the temple is about 30′.

What is the age of the Charra temple ? Opinions differ. Col. Dalton described the temples as "very old".[4] According to David Mc Cutchion, "the ornamentation of the *sikhara* suggestes an earlier stage than that of the Telkupi temples."[5] The earliest temple of Telkupi dates back to the 9th Cent. A.D. Therefore, if we accept the view of Mr. Mc Cutchion, the date of the Charra temple falls somewhere before 9th Cent. A.D. Sri Anantaprasad Sastri on the basis of the similarity of the *sikhara* and sloping shape of the *vimāna* with that of the Kandarya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho likes to identify the Charra temples "as instances of Hindu architecture of the 15th or 16th Cent." Sri Nirmal Kumar Basu discovers sculptural similarity between the Jaina images of Charra and those of Khajuraho. But such similarities are coincidental and are fraught with far-fetched imagination. On the strength of such accidental similarities it is not logical to conclude that the Khajuraho temple and images influenced the Charra temples and images, particularly, when the distance between Khajuraho and Charra is too long to have direct impact of one on the other. Hence, the date of Charra temples cannot be so late as the 15th or 16th Cent. A.D. as assumed by Sri Shastri and hinted at by Mr. Basu. On the contrary, the short-height of the Charra temple, its rudimentary wall decoration, small entrance doorway, very low and flat-roofed ceiling of the sanctum--all are suggestive of its remote antiquity. It is probable that the temples of Tuisama and Charra were built in those early years when Jainism had obtained a foot-hold in this forest land and was stabilizing its position.

(iii) The Ruined Temples of Pakbirra

Pakbirra, about thirty miles south-east of Purulia, in Puncha P.S., was probably the biggest Jaina centre in Manbhum. Mr. J. D. Beglar[6] who visited the place in 1872-73 and examined the remains in situ informs us that there were altogether 21 temples[7] of which 13 were built of stone and 8 of brick—most of these being in ruins. Out of these 21 temples, Beglar

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] 'Notes on the Temples of Purulia', David Mc Cutchion, *District Census Handbook, Purulia*, 1961.
[6] *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, Vol. VIII, *Bengal Provinces*, 1872-73, pp. 193-94.
[7] 'Pakbirra—A lost Jaina Centre of Purulia', Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Jain Journal*, Vol. XII No. 1, July 1977.

saw only five temples including one of brick standing at his time. At present there are only three temples all of stone and are badly ruined. Two temples standing on the south and facing north are in somewhat perceptible shape upto the *bāḍa* portion while the third one standing on the western corner and facing east is nothing more than a confused heap of stones.

From the two southern temples which are same type of temples, a rough idea can be gathered about the basic features of the stone temples of Pakbirra. Recently, when repairs to the temples were undertaken by the Public Works Department of Purulia under the directive of the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal, casual digging was done in search of burried stones near the plinth of the southern-most temple. As a result, the complete *pābhāga* portion so long burried underground came out and a large number of stone images of Jaina Tirthankaras were also unearthed.

As it appears now, the temples stand on a *piṣṭa* or *jagati*, an artificial platform built of stone slabs. The *pābhāga* which rises above the *jagati* is *tri-ratha* on plan, but the *tri-ratha* structures are broken into vase-like forms in such a manner that the *tri-ratha* plan appears to be *sapta-ratha* projections. Each vase-like form consists of six mouldings,—the lowest one is of *khurā-shaped* above which there are three *kumbhas* with star-like projections, a *khurā* surmounted by a *kumbha*. The central *ratha* is *khurā*-shaped at the base relieved by a recess above, a set of *kumbhas* crowned by two *khurā* mouldings.

The *bāḍa* consists of three *rathas* or divisions. The central *rāhā* has an oblong niche at the base above which there are three vertical rows of six *khurā* mouldings. The *anurāhā* in each side has pilaster in the shape of miniature temple built with *khurās* and crowned by *āmalaka*. The *kanika* is in the form of a pilaster consisting of vertical bands the central one of which has at the base a *khurā* and an inverted *khurā* moulding. The *varaṇḍa* also *khurā*-shaped has a recess relieved with small stepped pilasters.

The walls of the entrance door at first rise straightway after which these come closer through a series of overlapping courses of stones taking the form of a triangle of inverted steps. Once there was a *maṇḍapa* in front of the entrance doorway five courses of stone-work of which still exist. These are plain dressed stones of dry masonry. This *maṇḍapa* was definitely a later addition as the stones of the *maṇḍapa* are not only of a different variety, but more surely these are not bonded in any way to the original temple walls.

The *garbhagṛha* is 5′ square. The internal walls above a certain height are corbelled until these meet the roof of the sanctum which is covered with two pieces of stone slabs. The *gaṇḍi* above the sanctum roof has no less than two *muḍas*.

So far as the internal construction is concerned the stone temples of Pakbirra have similarities with the second group of temples at Telkupi. The temples of Pakbirra have *muḍas* above the roof of the sanctum and the sanctum walls are also corbelled like those of the temples of Telkupi. But unlike the temples of Telkupi, the construction and mouldings of the *pābhāga* and those of the *bāḍa* of the Pakbirra temples are completely different. The mouldings of the *pābhāga* of the Pakbirra temples have close affinity (though in a debased form) with those of the stone temple of Kroshjuri[8] the date of which has been assigned by scholars to the 7th or 8th Cent. A.D. The entrance openings of the Pakbirra temples unlike those of the Telkupi temples which are rectangular in shape are triangular above and are built of overlapping courses of stones. These doorways are similar to those of the brick temples of Boram or Deulghat (Joypur P.S., Purulia) the dates of which are placed in the 10th Cent. A.D.[9] Hence the date of the Pakbirra temple may fall somewhere between the 8th Cent. A.D. and 10th Cent. A.D., and not later than the date of the second group of temples of Telkupi i.e. 11th and 12th Cent. A.D. as has been asserted by Smt. Debala Mitra.[10] The Bengal List places the Pakbirra temples in the 9th or 10th Cent. A.D.[11]

(iv) Pañcāyatana Temples of Deoli

In the village Deoli (Baghmundi, P.S. Purulia) there is a *pañcāyatana* group of temples within an area of 80′/55′. The enclosure wall built of stones has long been destroyed leaving only traces of the same on and above the ground. This group of temples belonged to the Jainas. Of the five temples, the central one has tumbled down and of the four corner shrines two in more or less complete shape stand to this day and the remaining two are completely destroyed.

[8] 'Kroshjurir Siddheswar Shib Mandir' (in Bengali), Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Yuvamanas* (Govt. of West Bengal, Department of Youth Welfare), No. 10, July, 1977, pp. 97-100.

[9] 'Deulghatar Debdeul', (Puruliar Purakirti-5), Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Chatrak*, pp. 187-199.

[10] 'Telkupi—a submerged temple-site in West Bengal', Debala Mitra, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 76. p. 56.

[11] *List of Monuments of Bengal*, P.W.D., Govt. of Bengal, 1896.



Fig. 1 Temple of Tuisama



Fig. 2 Temple of Charra : Front View



Fig. 3 Temple of Charra : Rear View

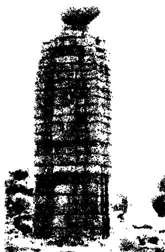


Fig. 12 North-eastern Temple of Deoli : Rear View

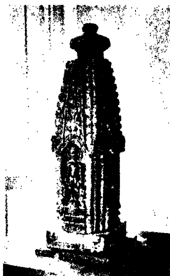


Fig. 13 Caumukha Miniature Temple, Palma



Fig. 14 Caumukha of Pakbirra



Fig. 15 Caumukha of Pakbirra

The central temple faces north and stands upto a certain height of the *gaṇḍi* in a precarious position. The *pābhāga* portion is burried underground and beneath the debris of its own tumbled blocks. The entrance opening is built of overlapping courses of stones like those of the Pakbirra temples. The huge blocks of stones heaped in front of the temple prove the existence of other structures like *mukha-maṇḍapa* etc. pre-occupying the entrance to the sanctum. As Beglar reports, it consisted of an *antarāla*, a *mahāmaṇḍapa*, an *ardha-maṇḍapa* and probably a portico.[12] The stones of the main temple are of fine-grained sandstone, while those of the ruined frontal structures are of course-grained sandstone and are of different colour. Besides, there are no proofs of joints between the frontal structures and the main wall of the sanctum. It is, therefore, probable that the ruined frontal structures were later additions as we have seen in the case of Pakbirra temple.

From the mouldings of the eastern wall, it is evident that the temple was *pañca-ratha* on plan. The central *rāhā* of the *bāḍa* consists of a rectangular niche at the base surmounted by a miniature temple of two *piḍas* of *khurā*-shaped mouldings surmounted by a *beki*, an *āmalaka* and a *kalasa* with leafs inset into the wall. The *anurāhās* are very thin, less projected and plain. The slightly recessed *kāṇṭi* above the *baraṇḍa* has a *khurā*-shaped moulding bordered with horizontal lining projected over it. This arrangement is repeated after two courses of stone-work giving the impression of two *baraṇḍas* and two *kāṇṭis*.

The *gaṇḍi* has also five divisions, but are entirely plain stone-work. The whole temple is devoid of any decoration. It is built of plain dressed stones and no mortar was used in the masonry work. It seems that originally the temple was given a coat of plaster with incised decoration over it a fragment of which is still sticking to the eastern wall.

The *garbhagṛha* which enshrines a finely-cut stone image of a Jaina Tirthankara, probably of Santinatha, measures 5′ square. The low ceiling of the sanctum consists of six courses of over-lapping stones which meet below a square roof.

Among the two existing corner shrines, one stands in the north-east and the other in the south-west. These are same temples. Both the temples about 20′ high have *pañcaratha* projections on the *bāḍa* and the *gaṇḍi*. Mr. David Mc Cutchion has rightly pointed out that these are very similar to the temple at Harmasra in Bankura district and the temple at Charra

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

in Purulia. The plain surface walls of the temples recall the walls of the Harmasra temple,[13] while the small entrance openings (so small that even a boy is to crawl to enter into the sanctum) have closer affinity with that of the Charra temple. There is in both the temples false arch of overlapping courses of stones behind the door-sill. It is curious that this architectural device which was generally used to lessen the weight on the entrance opening has been applied even in these small structures. Either this was conventionally used or the architects felt it architecturally necessary because the lower portion of the temple is too small in comparison to the height of the *vimāna*. The ruined facade of the south-west temple shows that the *gaṇḍi* internally had two chambers above tne sanctum roof tied with one *muḍa*.

The most impressive difference between the corner shrines and the central temple is in the construction of the door-way. The door-ways of the corner shrines are very small, rectangular in shape and have two pilasters, whereas, the entrance opening of the central temple is larger and the side walls above a certain height are built in overlapping method forming a triangular shape. The doorway of the central temple is similar to those of the Pakbirra temples. Thus the application of two different architectural methods within the same enclosure of a *pañcāyatana* group is very curious and pose a perplexing problem as regards to the date of erection of these temples. It is probable that the erectors of these temples originally had no intention or plan of constructing a *pañcāyatna* group and the corner shrines were built earlier, and the central one was conceived later on or vice-versa. Low height, plain treatment of the outer walls. very small and rectangular opening of the door-way and low ceiling of the sanctum may lead us to fix an earlier date for the corner shrines. On the other hand, the similarity of the doorway of the central shrine with those of the Pakbirra temples drives us to the conclusion that the central shrine was either contemporary to the Pakbirra temples or earlier than the Pakbirra temples. David Mc Cutchion observed that "the image of Santinatha (installed in the sanctum of the central shrine) is much superior in workmanship to any of the sculptures at Pakbirra." Thus he hinted at an earlier date for the central shrine than that of the Pakbirra temples.

(v) *Miniature Temples*

Some of the ancient temple-sites of Manbhum have produced a number of monolithic miniature temples. Perhaps the oldest specimen

[13] *Bankura Jelar Purakirti*, Amiya Kr. Bandopadhyay, pub. P.W.D. Govt. of West Bengal, 1971 (see last plate).

was obtained from the ruins of Charra. A photograph of this temple was published in *Indian Archaeology*, 1960-61, p. 67, pl. 78B (Archaeological Survey of India). It shows the curvilinear form of the roof with vertical rows of decorative features, consisting of replicas of the temple with figures of Jaina Tirthankaras in between them. According to Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, "This is a distinctive feature not found in any actual temple of this type in Bengal."[14] Several other miniature temples all with Jaina Tirthankara figures in the central niches were discovered from Charra but unfortunately except some fragments of the same, all the well-preserved replicas have since been transported elsewhere. Among those, two miniature temples have been collected by the Ramkrishna Mission, Purulia and the third one has been kept in the house of Sri Anil Choudhuri, Amla Para, Purulia.

The superb specimen of this type of *rekha* miniature was collected from the Jaina remains of Palma, a village situated on the Purulia-Manbazar road and is now enshrined in the modern Jaina temple in the heart of Purulia town. This slim miniature temple is *triratha* on plan with three mouldings in the *pābhāga*. In the central niches are sculptured four standing figures of Jaina Tirthankaras under trifoiled arches. The existence of these arches is very interesting because we do not find the use of such arches in the *rekha* temples of Manbhum standing to this day. The *gaṇḍi* has five divisions. The central *paga*, decorated with intricate scroll work is wide at the base but grows narrow as it mounts to the top. The other *pagas* have *khurā*-shaped mouldings. The thick and high *beki* rises over the *bisama* and is crowned by a thick, round and faceted *āmalaka* surmounted by what was perhaps a *kalaśa* now broken. This miniature temple contains one line inscription engraved in the lowest step of the *pābhāga* below one of the Tirthankaras. The inscription written in local language has been read by Dr. D. C. Sircar as *dānapati āṇīsum*. The inscription does not tell us who this *āṇīsum* was except that he has been described as '*dānapati*' or 'great donor'. He might have been a Jaina monk, a pilgrim or a lay devotee of the Faith. Whatever might have been his personal status, he did a commendable job by offering this *Caumukha* temple or *pratimā-sarvatobhadrikā* as a mark of respect to the Jaina Tirthankaras and devotion to the Faith and earned the epithet '*dānapati*'. The date of the inscription has been tentatively fixed by Dr. Sircar in the 11th Cent. A.D. Evidently, Palma where this miniature temple was found among other Jaina remains was a flourishing centre of the Jainas in the 11th Cent. A.D.

[14] *History of Ancient Bengal*, p. 617.

At Pakbirra there are two miniature temples. Both these replicas have two mouldings in the *pābhāga* above which there are on all the four sides figures of Jaina Tirthankaras standing in the case of one and seated in the other flanked by their respective attendants. The *gaṇḍis* of these temples are *piḍa*-shaped. The smaller temple has three *piḍas* with marginal recess in between and the surfaces of the *piḍas* have leafy designs. The bigger temple has two broad *piḍas* separated by a comparatively large recess with perforated designs. The *piḍas* are decorated with scroll-work and leafy designs, while the lower *piḍa* has two swans facing each other at the centre. As crowning element both the temples have a thick and broad *beki* surmounted by a large *āmalaka*.

These miniature *piḍa*-temples occupy a significant place in the history of temple architecture of Manbhum. *Piḍa deuls* are rare in this part of Western Radha. Hence, these replicas may testify to the fact that at one time single *piḍa deuls* of this variety had been erected on the soil of Manbhum side by side with the *rekha* temples. At least it may safely be concluded that this type of temples were not unknown to the architects of Manbhum.

All the miniature temples which came down to us belong to the Jaina pantheon. These were votive offerings of the pilgrims, devotees to the Faith or the laity as marks of their religiocity. According to the Jaina iconography, these miniature temples are called *caumukha* temples or *pratimā-sarvatobhadrikā*. While commenting on the *caumukha* temples of Charra Sri R. D. Banerjee observed : "These *caumukhas* differ from their prototypes of the ancient period, e.g., the four-fold images or *pratimā-sarvatobhadrikā* of the Mathura School of Sculpture and from the modern and medieval *caturmukhas* of Rajputana and Central India. They are more or less like the Buddhist stele or miniature temples of the Eastern School."[15]

Photographs : Fig. 1-3 by the author, fig. 4-15 by his friend Sri Shib Sundar Dan, Hemanta Art Press, Purulia.

[15] *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculptures*, R. D. Banerjee, p. 144-146.

Jaina Sculptures from Bhavanipur Hatuyara and Golamara

ATUL CHANDRA BHOWMICK

Bhavanipur village is situated about 11 kms. east of Purulia town along the Purulia-Hura road and traverse with a right turn nearly 3 kms. through a village path. The villages Hatuyara and Golamara are located nearly 8 kms. and 14 kms. respectively north-east and north of Purulia town. Bhavanipur and Hatuyara villages visualise one Jaina sculpture in each village and Golamara, three. The sculptures are made ubiquitously of chlorite-biotite schist[1] which shows a bluish/greenish black colour, obtainable locally. Iconography and style of the sculptures are the focal points of discussion.

1. *Rsabhanatha (113.0 cms. × 50.5 cms.) at Bhavanipur*

Rsabhanatha (fig. 1) stands erect in *kāyotsarga* (letting loose the body) on a *padmāsana*, the petals of which are spread out in two rows, downwards and upwards. The *pañcaratha* pedestal, from right to left, holds a male donor with *añjali mudrā* in sitting position, right leg of him is bent and folded, left leg points upwards, lion, bull, the *lāñchana* mark, lion and a pair of female donors who are praying their obeisance with folded hands in kneeling posture. The face of a female of the pair is much defaced sometimes even questioning its identity. The image is flanked by adherent *cauri*-bearers holding *cāmaras* by right hands, one on each side of the divinity. The image, wearing *jaṭā-mukuṭa* is framed by borders suggesting a rectangular throne. The ovaloid nimbus at his back is encompassed by lotus petals at its margin. The rectangular stele is crowned with a projected trilinear parasol with a knob at top, two circular flowers with eight extended petals, one on each side, below the *chatra*, flying

[1] Dr. Asok Kumar Bhattacharya identified the material.

vidyādharas holding long garlands and marks of heavenly musical instruments, namely, *tammata* (drum) and *jaya-ghaṭa* (cymbal). On the two lateral margins of the back slab four rows of standing Tirthankaras, three in a row are discernible. The middle of the pedestal bears a line of inscription,[2] a few letters of which are partly defaced and hence makes problem of decipherment. The image is assignable to about 10th century A.D.

2. *Supārśvanātha (81.0 cms.×51.5 cms.) at Hatuyara*

Suparsvanatha (fig. 2) with circular halo and *samapada* pose stands upright on a seat of five petalled bloomed lotus. Flying *vidyādhara* carrying long garland and *hatthaga*[3] beating drum is noticeable on the right upper corner of the rectangular stele, while flying *vidyādhara* on the left. Left side musical instrument is not viewed as a portion of the left corner of the stele is broken out. The image represents a canopy of five snake hoods of a cobra spread over his head from back readily distinguishing the seventh Tirthankara Suparsvanatha. Over the hoods a *chatra* of Sirisa (*Acacia sirisha*) tree makes its appearance. *Cauri*-bearers, one on each side of Bhagavan Suparsvanatha holding *cāmara* by right and left hands resting on waist stand in *dvibhaṅga* pose. Between them and the Tirthankara as well as on the pedestal snakes are carved, the emblem of Suparsvanatha. On right side of the image, on stele[4] there are Surya, Mangala, Brhaspati and Sani Grahas below each, while on the left are Candra, Budha, Sukra and Rahu arranged in single file, just to pay reverence. Absence of Ketu is of great importance from the chronological point of view. Ketu is a later addition in Indian art (Banerjea : 1974 : 444). The head of the lower most *jyotiṣka deva* of the right side is broken away either for vendalism or for dalliance. The *triratha* pedestal represents male and female donors with *añjali mudrā*, on right and left side respectively in the upper register, while *nāginī* and *nāga* figures in the lower register. General crudity of the sculpture in question assigns it to c. 8th century A.D. The Hindu populace of the nearby villages worships the image as Parvati on Asvin (September-October) months during *Durgā Pūjā*. The image is installed open on a cemented base near a Siva temple and is highly abraded.

[2] For eye-copy of the inscription, see, Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Glimpses of the History of Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1983, Inscription No. 6. Dr. D. C. Sircar reads the first word as *Danapati*

[3] *Hatthaga* means mark of the palm.

[4] The introduction of Grahas on stele on two sides of the *mula nayaka* seems a tradition of the Eastern School. In the west Grahas were placed on pedestal of the Tirthankara. See, U. P. Shah, *Studies in Jaina Art*, Banaras, 1955, p. 19.

3. *Vāsupujya (44.3 cms.×24.1 cms.) at Golamara*

Tirthankara Vasupujya (fig. 3), wearing *jaṭā-mukuṭa* stands at *samapadasthānaka* under a trifoil arch surmounted by a three-tiered *chatra* on a lotus seat placed on a *triratha* pedestal. The top of the stele is cut obliquely on both sides to have a triangular shape. The idol is framed by a rectangular border having two conical points and circles, at top of each vertical line suggesting the enthroned Vasupyjya. Strings made of pearl beads hang vertically from the horizontal top of the throne. The *chatra* indicates the heavenly Kadamba *vṛkṣa* under which he received the *kevala jñāna*. On two lateral sides of the twelfth Tirthankara Vasupujya standing effigies of four Tirthankaras in single file, two on each side. Flying *vidyādharas* with garlands and musical drum and a twig with a *kadamba* flower and two leaves are on dexter side and on sinister, the *vidyādharas* with mechanism to show them moving, cymbal and *kadamba* flower are visible. The presence of *kadamba* flower indicates that it is an image of Digambara sect. The image is flanked by *cauri*-bearer Dviprsta-Vasudeva who stands in *dvibhaṅga* pose. The *triratha* pedestal depicts his *lāñchana*, the *mahiṣa* (buffalo) at its middle. It seemingly be dated of about 10th century A.D.

4. *Mahāvīra (161.0 cms.×33.0 cms.) at Golamara*

The image of Mahavira (fig. 4), the last of the galaxy of twentyfour Tirthankaras and the senior contemporary of Gautama Buddha is represented standing on a *padmāsana* with stele and hands broken out, and unfortunately lost for vendalism. Only the tips of fingers are attached to the body of the sculpture indicating *kāyotsarga* pose. The matted locks of hair with pronounced *uṣnīṣa*, elongated ear-lobs and straight, big drooping eyes are his chief marks of identification. The attitude of the sculpture evinces that the *devādhideva* is absolutely restrained from *rāgas* (desires). The hair of the Tirthankara is arranged in short schematic curls which represents the circular form of the universe (*loka*) as well its beginninglessness and endlessness. The image is flanked by *cauri*-bearers, who wear a conical *mukuṭa*, necklace, armlet and bangle. In two tiered pedestal lions are carved on its upper register. On lower register, from right to left, kneeling male devotee with folded hands, lion, his cognizance and kneeling female devotee with folded palms have beautifully been carved out. The hips of the attendant *cauri*-bearers being carved in a sensuous modelling in the round calling a glimpse of the South Indian bronze casting. The Mahavira is inscribed[5] on the pedestal and the date of the sculpture may be placed in c. 10th century A.D.

[5] For eye-copy, see, Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.* Inscription No. 5.

5. *Dvithīrthikās (30.0 cms. × 15.0 cms.) at Golamara*

Two small Jaina sculptures were carved in one stele. The figure on dexter is identified as Mahavira as lion accompanies him while the sinister figure is beyond recognition as his cognizance is out of vision for installation deep into the floor. The images stand erect on *padmāsana* and are flanked by *cauri*-bearers. The right leg of the right sided *cāmara* bearer is broken. Mahavira wears *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and the other, *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*. Petal motifs decorate the halos of the divinities. The upper portion of the rectangular slab shows full blossomed lotus flower, flowering twig, five petalled circular flower and hanging strings of pearl beads on either side of the stele. A trilineal *chatra* crowned the top, over which *pada ciṇhas* (leg-marks) made their appearance. The *chatra* over the right figure is the stylised representation of Sala (*shorea robusta*) tree under which Mahavira received the *kevala jñāna*, the only aim of yearning soul. As a unique feature upon the pedestal donor, lion, flowering scroll and offerings on *ratnapātra* to propitiate the deities are seen. This beautiful specimen may well be attributed to a date of c. 10th century A.D.

These three images of Golamara village are placed in a newly built small brick temple known as *Bhairavasthāna* constructed in a depopulated area, west of the village and the Hindus worshipped the images as Bhairavanathas, their own religious deities, on *Makara saṅkranti* day (January-February) to fulfil one's vows, irrespective of creed and religion.

The massiveness and crudity are the features of the sculptures found in Purulia. The emergence of many Jaina icons in Purulia district definitely indicates that the Nirgrantha (without a bond) religion had once a stronghold in this rugged land of Vajrabhumi[6] in Radha and for that Jaina cult was in flourishing condition. The recurrent occurrence of nude images proves that the Digambara sect of the Jainas was dominant in Radha (Banerji : 1981 : 144). But the majority of them are not inscribed and dated and hence create problem to assign them correct dates. Whatever dates assigned are relative datings on stylistic ground. The preponderance of icons hints also that the Jaina teachers installed their religious sculptures at places for propagating the right perception, right knowledge and right conduct, the three-fold life principles of Jaina faith among the laity and to turn the region as a centre of Jainism.

The sculptures under discussion, except the Bhavanipur icon were not modelled with meticulous care. The workmanship of shoulders,

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 7 and foot-note 5 at p. 8.



Fig. 1 Rsabhanatha, Bhavanipur



Fig. 2 Suparsvanatha, Hatuyara



Fig. 3 Vasupujya, Golamara



Fig. 4 Mahavira, Golamara

hands, legs and body form of these sculptures displays stiffness. The visual presentation of the half-closed eyes due to the drooping upper eyelids, closed mouth with protuding lower thick lip and the facial expression convincingly point towards the meditation and concentration of mind which leads to *mokṣa* (absolute liberation). The shining face indicates his abstinence from mundane affairs and attainment of *kevala jñāna.* In this regard the artist unmistakably showed mastery in successfully carving the sculptures with spiritual squareness, lest with aesthetic beauty and lyrical grace. But the grossness of the sculptures proves that sculptors devoted more attention to their ritual. The artists lavished most of their skill to visualise the taciturnity and *yoga mudrā* of the sculptures and hence delineated them most simplisticly without affixing much decorative motifs on the stele. Yet they all are correct in liturgical treatise. The Golamara broken Mahavira (fig. 4) has a classic grandeur in conformity with the *śilpa* text. Today people of Hindu faith has accepted and worshipped these deities in most of the places as Hinduised icons without knowing that these are Jaina images.

[I greatfully acknowledge the help of Shri Pratip Kumar Mitra, Registering Officer, Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal, Western Circle, Burdwan for photographing the sculptures reproduced here and for his indomitable encouragement, and of Dr. Asok Kumar Bhattacharya, Lecturer, Department of Geology, Jogamaya Devi College, Calcutta for identifying the material of the sculptures.]

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A Note on the Jaina Sculptures at Palma

PRATIP KUMAR MITRA

Palma,[1] a village situated at a distance of about twenty kilometers[2] from Purulia town along the Purulia-Manbazar road in the Purulia district of West Bengal, was noted long ago as a site of ancient Jaina settlement. A description of the antiquities of this place was first published by Dalton[3] in 1866 basing his account on the observations made by Lieutenant R. C. Money, which was reproduced also in Hunter's Statistical Account.[4] Dalton refers to a principal temple which was "on a mound covered with stone and brick", and to numerous Jaina Tirthankara images lying at different places. One of these images was larger than life-size which was "broken away from the slab on which it was cut, and the head, separated from the body, lies near". Round about this temple mound were other mounds covered with cut stone and bricks.[5] Dalton's account however contains a serious error regarding the location of Palma which he states was within a few miles of the station of Purulia and near Cossai river.[6] This led Coupland[7] to tag the description of Dalton to a place named Balarampur[8] of some antiquarian importance. Bloch[9] visited Palma in 1903, but being unware of the controversy could not elucidate

1 Palma (J. L. No. 551) is situated at 86° 28' East (longitude) and 23° 13' North (latitude) under the Puncha P.S. of Purulia district. *Cf.*, Suphal Mondal, *Purulia Pariciti* (in Bengali), Purulia, 1981, p. 62 ; also, *Census* 1961 *West Bengal* : *District Census Handbook*, Purulia, Calcutta, n.d., p. 385.

2 The place lies between 20 km and 21 km posts along the Purulia-Manbazar Road.

3 E. T. Dalton, "Notes on a Tour in Manbhum in 1864-65", *Journal of the* Asiatic Society of Bengal, Part I, No. III (N.S. no. cxxxiv) Calcutta, 1866, pp. 186-87.

4 W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. XVII, London, 1877, pp. 298-99.

5 Dalton, *op.cit.*, pp. 186-87.

6 *Ibid*, p. 186.

7 F. H. Coupland, *Bengal District Gazetteer—Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 263-64. See also, D. R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, Patna, 1963, pp. 13-14, and p. 356.

8 For Balarampur see, J. D. Beglar "Report on a Tour through the Bengal Provinces in 1872-73," *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, VIII, Calcutta, 1878, p. 183 ; Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, "Balarampur-er Mandir" (in Bengali), *Chatrak*, 3rd year, No. 4, Purulia, 1380 B.S., pp. 221-30.

9 T. Bloch, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey, Bengal Circle*, For the year ending with April, 1903, Calcutta, 1903, p. 14.

on the error in Dalton's account.[10] He however refers to the temple at Palma "been reduced to a heap of debris, among which some stone pillars and two colossal statues of Tirthankaras still lie. A few smaller statues are inside the village".[11]

Over the years Palma has been denuded of much of its antiquarian wealth. Sculptures, architectural fragments, and other antiquities were gradually removed from this place. What is left to-day, is preserved mainly through the endeavours of Sri Sarak Jain Samiti of Kharkhari, Dhanbad. The Samiti has constructed a modern temple in the village and has restored the extant complete sculptures, three in number, in the temple. These sculptures, all representing Jaina Tirthankaras, are in a fair state of preservation. They are made of greenish chlorite stone[12] rendered a little black by the rituals of daily prayer. The three Tirthankara images are placed on a cemented platform and set up in a cemented wall. The images in order from right to left are :

[10] I am inclined to believe that Dalton has given a description of Palma although he has confused its location with Balarampur. My reasons are as follows :

(a) During 1872-73, when Beglar visited Balarampur, he noticed a large temple built of cut stone and bricks which he dates to 'after Man Singh's period'. This temple was extant during subsequent visits by David Mc Cutchion and Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay in the sixties and seventies of the present century (see note 8 above). Now, had Dalton been giving a description of Balarampur he would have mentioned this temple in his account. The ruined temple on a mound he refers about was certainly not the temple described by Beglar and subsequently by Mc Cutchion and Mukhopadhyay.

(b) Dalton refers to a number of Jaina Tirthankara images lying scattered around the temple mound, and four more near an octagonal stone pillar. None of these images were noticed by Beglar during his visit to Balarampur in 1872-73. Now, if Dalton was describing Balarampur then we are to believe that all these sculptures were removed some time, roughly between 1864 and 1872-73. Apart from the improbability that a particular site should be denuded of all its sculptures in a period when Tirthankara images were ubiquitous in Manbhum, not a single Tirthankara image is on record to have been collected from Balarampur proper to-date. On the other hand, four such images were collected from Palma by the Patna Museum, and five of them are extant at Palma.

(c) The description of the colossal image of Tirthankara provided by Dalton tallies with the one still preserved at Palma.

(d) It appears that Coupland, who first noticed the error in Dalton's account, did not visit Palma and was apparently not in a position to compare the antiquarian remains of both the places to arrive at a fair conclusion.

(e) The description of Palma left by Bloch, albiet brief, agrees in general with the account of Dalton.

[11] Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[12] Chlorite-Biotite Schist. I am grateful to Dr. A.C. Bhowmick, Lecturer, Department of Museology, University of Calcutta, for providing me with this information.



Fig. 1 Vasupujya Palma

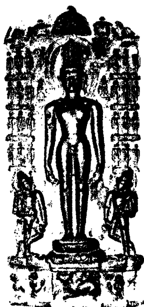


Fig. 2 Rsabhanatha, Palma



Fig. 3 Rsabhanatha, Palma



Fig. 4 Tirthankara, Palma

1. *Tīrthankara Vāsupūjya*, 82 cm. × 42 cm.

The Jina, in *kāyotsarga* posture (fig. 1) stands on a lotus placed on what appeared to be a *pañcaratha* pedestal, the central projection of which bears the *lāñchana*, a buffalo. The remaining facets are embellished with *ratnapatras* heaped with offerings, and stylized figures of lion. The Jina is sky-clad, has elongated ear-lobes, and his hair is arranged in schematic curls with a prominent *uṣṇiṣa*. On either side stands male *caurī*-bearers in graceful pose, wearing short lower garments and elegant ornaments comprising of wristlets, armlets, *ekāvalī*, *kuṇḍalas*, and a tall *ratna-mukuṭa*. On the edge of the back slab are eight planets (*Jyotiṣkadevas*) arranged in a vertical row of four on either side of the Jina. Those on the dexter side appear to be *Sūrya*, *Maṅgala*, *Bṛhaspati*, and *Śani* ; while those on sinister side are *Soma*, *Budha*, *Śukra*, and *Rāhu*. The back of the throne consists of jewelled posts supporting a cross-bar on which are triangular foliated plaques. The circular *śiraścakra* is gracefully rimmed with rows of leaves and beads, and has flowering twigs on either side. The small but proportionate *chatra* is slightly damaged at the front. *Vidyādharas* holding garlands can be seen on the top of the *parikara*, and also a drum and a pair of cymbals struck by disembodied hands.

2. *Tīrthankara Ṛṣabhanātha*, 88 cm. × 45 cm.

The Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* (fig. 2) on a lotus placed on a *pāncaratha* pedestal which has a bull, the *lāñchana* of the Jina, in the centre flanked by two devotees with their arms joined in adoration. The extreme end of the pedestal, on either side, bear the figure of a crouching lion. The saviour is sky-clad, his hair is dressed in a tall *jaṭājūṭa* with *keśa-vallarī* falling down the sides of the head. On either side stands sensitively modelled *cāmaradharas* holding a fly-wisk in one hand while the other rest on thigh. They wear short *dhotis* and elegant jewellary which includes wristlets, armlets, double stranded necklace, *kuṇḍalas*, anklets, and a decorated *mukuṭa*. The edge of the back slab is relieved with miniature figures of twenty-four Tirthankaras arranged in four vertical rows of three each on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*. Like the principal image, they also stand in *kāyotsarga* pose with their respective *lāñcanha* carved below each on a small pedestal. The ovoidal *prabhā-maṇḍala* is adorned with lotus petals on the edges, and has on either side a rosette carved on the stele. Above the head of the Jina is a three-tiered parasol damaged at the front, which is flanked by a pair of heavenly hands playing on drum and cymbals. The usual *vidyādharas* holding long flowering garlands can be seen on the top corners of the stele hovering in the conventional representation of clouds.

3. *Tīrthankara Ṛṣabhanātha*, 79.5 cm. × 38 cm.

Barring a few minor details like the absence of a rosette in the back slab, arrangement of the back of the throne, embellishment of the halo, the image (fig. 3) is iconographically identical to No. 2. above.

A few yards from the new Jaina temple a colossal image of a Tirthankara could be noticed on the northern wall of a modern structure enshrining a *liṅgam*, locally known as *Shiv-Mandir*. The image (170 cm. × 67 cm. fig. 4) is headless, weather worn, and could well be one of the two colossal images mentioned by Bloch,[13] or the one described by Dalton.[14] The Jina here stands in *kāyotsarga* on a double-petalled lotus placed on a small pedestal which bears no identifying *cinha*. Much of the back slab of the image is broken away ; on the extant part stands two male *caurī*-bearers flanking the Jina, the head of the one on the left being badly multilated. A further Tirthankara image can be seen in front of *Hari-Mandir* in the heart of the village. The image is embedded more than half in the earth. Nearby temple fragments can be observed strewn all over the ground.

The three Tirthankara images preserved at the modern Jaina temple bears close resemblance to the first group of sculptures at Anai-Jambad.[15] On stylistic grounds these can be assigned a date of *circa* eleventh century A.D. The colossal image of Jina appears to be of a slightly earlier age and can be dated around tenth century A.D.

A number of sculptures and other antiquities were removed from Palma during the present century. Some of these, including a colossal image of Ajitanatha, are preserved in the Patna Museum.[16] An inscribed miniature shrine has been installed in the modern Jaina temple at Purulia town.[17]

[The author would like to express his gratefulness to the President, Sri Sarak Jain Samiti, Kharkhari, district Dhanbad, Bihar, for kindly permitting him to publish the sculptures described under Nos 1 to 3 in the text. The photographs of these sculptures are published through the courtesy of the said Samiti.]

[13] Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[14] Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[15] See my "Jaina Sculptures from Anai-Jambad", *Jain Journal*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, Calcutta, October, 1983, p. 70.

[16] See, P. L. Gupta (edited), *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities (Stone Sculptures, Metal Images, Teracotta, and Minor Antiquities)*, Patna, 1965, pp. 90-92 ; also, A. Ghosh (edited), *Jaina Art and Architecture*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975, p. 265, p. 158 B.

[17] Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Glimpses of the History of Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1983, p. 40.

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a quarterly on Jainology

Jain Journal



JAIN BHAWAN
CALCUTTA

VOL. XVIII NOS. 1-4

May 1983—April 1984

Published by Moti Chand Bhura on behalf of Jain Bhawan from P-25 Kalakar Street and printed by him at The Technical & General Press, 17 Crooked Lane, Calcutta-69.

Editor : Ganesh Lalwani

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(Numbers in heavy type refer to issues, numbers in parenthesis to pages)

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Registered with the Registrar
of Newspapers for India
under No. R. N. 12121/66.